

Quake rocks Luzon

An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.5 jolted Luzon at 7:04 last night. The quake was centered 50 km west-southwest of Batangas and about 125 km south-southwest of Manila, the US Geological Survey said.

Media still have to follow guidelines even if 1017 lifted

MALACAÑANG PLANS TO MEET WITH NEWSPAPER, radio and TV organizations on Friday and Saturday to work out guidelines on media coverage under a state of national emergency amid mounting concern over the threat posed by Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 to press freedom.

Malacañang expects the print and electronic media to follow the guidelines even after the state of national emergency had been lifted, according

MEDIA/A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

■ BUSINESS / BI

Peso rallies to 51.38 against \$1, highest level in more than 3 years



■ ACROSS / A14

Red leader in coup plot arrest list already in jail for one year

■ NEWS / A3

No charges filed vs Peping Cojuangco, Boy Saycon but they're not off the hook

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, March 2, 2006

★ ★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 84 P1B

website: www.inq7.net

Senate report: GMA accountable for P728-M fertilizer scam

By TJ Burongio

WITH EVIDENCE INDICATING that she had knowledge of the fund releases and benefited from them, President Macapagal-Arroyo should be "held accountable" for the mismanagement of the P728-million fertilizer fund.

The Senate committee on

agriculture, together with the blue ribbon committee, yesterday made this conclusion after conducting six hearings on what it called a "premeditated, systematic and agricultural theft."

The fund, originally meant for the purchase of farm inputs, was believed to have been diverted and distributed as largesse to al-

lies of the administration to ensure Ms Arroyo's victory in the May 2004 presidential election.

"The President must be held accountable for the whole project because she was the one who assigned [Jocelyn 'Joc-joc'] Bolante. It's the office of the DBM (Department of Budget and Management) under her

who made the releases. So it's at the front door of Malacañang," Sen. Ramon Magsaysay, chair of the agriculture committee, said.

Magsaysay stopped short of recommending the filing of charges against the President.

"We're not asking that any cases be filed against the President. We're saying she's held account-

able," he told reporters in an ambush interview.

Bolante was an agriculture undersecretary when the funds were released just before the 2004 elections.

The agriculture and blue ribbon committees also recommended the filing of criminal and administrative charges

against Bolante, the alleged chief architect of the fund; former Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo; former Undersecretary Ibarra Poliquit; Undersecretary Belinda Gonzalez and Assistant Secretary Jose Felix Montes and all regional directors of the Department of Agriculture who

Senate/A4

Death for ex-lawmaker

Erap admits giving P8M to Rangers, Marines, Magdalo kin

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada has admitted giving total of P8 million to soldiers belonging to the Scout Ranger Regiment, the Philippine Marines and the families of Magdalo soldiers in December last year—not to fund a coup d'état but to add cheer to their Christmas.

This was revealed yesterday by Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor who said Estrada made the admission during a visit by him to the former President's Tanay resthouse two weeks before the coup attempt the government claims to have aborted on Friday last week.

Estrada himself confirmed the donations in telephone interviews with the Inquirer, saying the donations were made in good faith and in a transparent manner.

Defensor told the Inquirer that he confronted Estrada about reports he was financing military rebels during his visit with the deposed leader, who is under house arrest pending trial on plunder charges.

"I told him that we have reports that he was funding the military for an impending coup d'état," Defensor said. "But he told me this was not true."

Defensor said that based on Estrada's account, representatives of the Scout Rangers, the Marines and families of the jailed Magdalo

ERAP ADMITS/A4



DESTINATION: MUNTINLUPA. After eight years of legal battle, the Quintos brothers' sensational murder case ends in a guilty verdict for former Rep. Jose Villarosa (right, in brown shirt) and six farmers, the so-called "Mamburao 6." They were taken to the National Bilibid Prison.

GMA sets terms for lifting emergency edict

By Christine O. Avendaño

DESPITE THE LOUD CLAMOR for President Macapagal-Arroyo to end the state of national emergency, any decision on the matter is not immediately forthcoming.

Addressing the nation yesterday over government TV/radio, Ms Arroyo said she would lift the controversial Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 only if she were "satisfied" that the government had "control of the situation."

"I am asking for three reports to be submitted to me within 24 to 72 hours in order to assess the situation," she said, adding that

she said she had given her officials 24-72 hours to conduct an assessment.

Ms Arroyo said she wanted to lift PP 1017 "as soon as possible" because of the government's determination "to get back to its core mission: to strengthen our economy, eliminate poverty and focus on the people's business."

"I am asking for three reports to be submitted to me within 24 to 72 hours in order to assess the situation," she said, adding that

these would come from Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz and Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao.

Gonzalez was assigned to assess supposed destabilization efforts; Cruz, military control; and Lomibao, domestic peace and order.

"I will lift the state of emergency when I am satisfied that each official can assure me that we have control of the situation," Ms Arroyo said.

"The government acted to ensure the domestic safety of the public, and I will lift the state of emergency as soon as the criteria are met," she said.

But Gonzalez said he was not inclined to recommend the lifting of PP 1017.

At a news briefing called minutes after the President's address, Gonzalez cited what he called "loose ends," such as the Time magazine report indicating that

GMA/A4

6 others convicted for Quintos murders

By DJ Yap and Cyril L. Bonabante PDI Research

FORMER REP JOSE VILLAROSA and the "Mamburao Six" farmers were sentenced to death yesterday for murdering two brothers over a political and land dispute in Occidental Mindoro, capping one of the most sensational cases of 1997.

After eight years of legal battle, a Quezon City court found Villarosa and the farmers guilty of killing Michael and Paul Quintos, sons of Villarosa's political rival Ricardo Quintos.

All seven accused were meted out the death penalty and ordered to pay the victims' heirs P200,000 in indemnity and moral damages, and P279,845 in actual damages by Judge Ma. Theresa Yadao of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 81.

Quintos said he was glad that the "truth has finally come out."

He added "it's a pity that many lives were lost."

In an 86-page decision, the longest she ever penned, Yadao said she found sufficient evidence that the accused conspired to kill

DEATH/A4

ConCom member hits Cha-Cha

By Norman Bordadora

A MEMBER OF THE CONSULTATIVE Commission has "dissociated" himself from the group formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to draft a revised Constitution, an e-mail that reached the Inquirer showed.

Former Trade Secretary and ex-Sen. Vicente Paterno said in his e-mailed message that the ConCom draft and its transitory provisions being discussed in the House of Representatives convinced him that the proposed Charter revision is meant not "only to retain her presidency but to expand her [President's] powers."

"(These provisions) should by

CONCOM/A4



A 'LEGEND' IN TEARS: Col. Ariel Querubin, commandant of the 1st Marine Brigade based in Marawi City, bids his men goodbye after the formal turnover rites of his command to Lt. Col. Luisito Marcelino.

Battle-scarred Marines teary-eyed as chief goes

By Fe Zamora and Ryan Rosauro PDI Mindanao Bureau

CAMPO RANAO, MARAWI CITY—COL. ARIEL QUERUBIN WAS IN tears yesterday when he relinquished his post as commandant of the First Marine Brigade here, an uncertain ending to an exciting, colorful and even charmed career in the Armed Forces.

Battle-scarred sergeants unabashedly wiped their noses as they held back tears and younger, sunburned soldiers bowed their heads as Querubin hugged them.

Marine Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, who presided at the turnover of command from Querubin to Lt. Col. Luisito Marcelino, extolled the be-medalled officer as a "legend," citing his distinguished combat record.

But Dolorfino also reminded the soldiers never to obey "illegal orders" even if it came from him.

BATTLE-SCARRED/A4

Mike A didn't go to Marawi? Tell that to the Marines

By Fe Zamora

CAMPO RANAO, MARAWI City—Soldiers split expletives whenever they hear claims that First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo was never here during the 2004 election to buy votes.

Once, they threw paper

MIKE A/A4

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PH RESEARCH/03/01/04

SOURCE: PAGASA

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Metro Manila | Partly Cloudy | Iligan | Partly Cloudy |
| Baguio | Partly Cloudy | Cebu | Partly Cloudy |
| Tuguegarao | Partly Cloudy | Tacloban | Cloudy with Rains |
| Lucena | Partly Cloudy | San. Santos | Partly Cloudy |
| Clark Zone | Partly Cloudy | Zambales | Partly Cloudy |
| Taytay | Partly Cloudy | Cagayan de Oro | Partly Cloudy |
| Legazpi | Partly Cloudy | Davao | Cloudy with Rains |
| Cebu | | | |

Arrest warrant out for Gringo



DAY OF ASHES. A priest, dipping his thumb into ashes that have been previously blessed, marks the forehead of a baby with the sign of cross to signify that the Catholic faithful ought to repent of their sins during the Lenten fast which began yesterday, Ash Wednesday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

SHOOTING OF PINOYS DFA summons Saudi envoy

WERE THEY REALLY CAUGHT IN A CROSSFIRE OR MISTAKEN FOR TERRORISTS?

Varying accounts of the deaths of two overseas Filipinos workers and the wounding of three others in a shooting incident involving Saudi police on Monday prompted the Department of Foreign Affairs to call the Saudi ambassador to a meeting yesterday.

Ambassador Mohammed Ameen Mohammed Wali has assured Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo that the Saudi government will conduct "a close inquiry on the circumstance of the police operation" and share the findings with Manila, the department said.

An official report from the Philippine embassy in Riyadh said the company vehicle carrying the Filipinos was "caught in a shooting incident" between Saudi police and a militant group on the morning of Feb. 27 at the Rawda District.

But Arab news agencies, as well as the ABS-CBN Middle East bureau, reported the incident as a case of mistaken police targets.

Arabnews.com said the security forces "opened fire" on the victims' four-door pickup which "they believed was carrying terrorists." It further described the shootings as a security check "that went awry."

The DFA on Tuesday confirmed the deaths of Abel Monterola and Felix Llorando, who succumbed to gunshot wounds while undergoing treatment at the Riyadh Medical Center — Shimeis Hospital.

The three other Filipinos were taken to the King Fahd National Guard Hospital. They were identified as Rodel Canlas Miranda, Salvador Traquena Bibon, 34, and Jimmy Mayo Pactor, 36.

The Filipinos, employed by Bader Al Soude Construction Co., were in their service vehicle on their way to their job site when the shooting took place at Exit 9, Al Waha Compound, the DFA added.

NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS OF KEPPEL PHILIPPINES MARINE, INC.

All holders of shares of common stock of Keppel Philippines Marine, Inc. (hereinafter, the "Shareholders" and "KPM") are hereby notified that on 27 February 2006, KS Investments Pte. Ltd. ("the Bidder") filed a Tender Offer Report (SEC Form 19-1) with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") and the Philippine Stock Exchange ("PSE") pursuant to Section 19 of the Securities Regulation Code. The Bidder, which is a corporation duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Republic of Singapore, intends to acquire 70.529% or 1,406,665,058 common shares of KPM.

The Tender Offer shall commence at 10:00 a.m. on 1 March 2006, and end at 4:00 p.m. on 28 March 2006 (the "Tender Offer Period"). Common shares of KPM to be tendered (the "Subject Shares"), if any, are intended to be crossed on the Philippine Stock Exchange ("PSE") on 6 April 2006 (the "Cross Date") subject to PSE approval. Should any of the business days during the period from 1 March 2006 to the commencement of the Tender Offer Period and 6 April 2006, the Cross Date, inclusive, be officially declared a non-working holiday after the filing of the Tender Offer Report (SEC Form 19-1) on 27 February 2006, the period shall be extended by the number of business days corresponding to those which were declared as non-working holidays.

The purchase price for the acquisition of the Subject Shares is Php 1.00 for each share (the "Tender Offer Price"). Payments shall be in Philippine Pesos and in the form of manager's checks drawn against ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "Paying Agent"). ATR Kim Eng Capital Partners, Inc., the Financial Advisor to the Bidder, has certified that the Bidder has sufficient resources, including cash, to safely full acceptance of the Tender Offer. The Bidder has allocated Php 1,406,665,058 in cash for this purpose. The Bidder intends to pay the tendered and accepted Subject Shares on the 10th trading day after the close of the Tender Offer Period. Payments for the tendered and accepted Subject Shares shall be made available by the Paying Agent for pick up by the tendering Shareholders after 9:00 a.m. on 11 April 2006 assuming the shares are crossed on the Cross Date.

Every Shareholder of KPM who holds stock certificates ("Scrip Shareholders") should submit within the Tender Offer Period their duly endorsed stock certificates and the duly accomplished Application together with the following requirements to ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "Depository"), 17th Floor, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Telephone No. (63-2) 848-8888 (Contact Person: Nilda S. Enriquez):

If you are a CORPORATE SHAREHOLDER, please submit the following:

1. Certified true copies of the Articles of incorporation and By-laws of the shareholder and latest amendments thereof.
2. A notarized Secretary's Certificate substantially in the form prescribed by the Bidder setting forth resolutions of the tendering shareholder's Board of Directors authorizing the tender and sale of the Company's Subject Shares and designating the signatories for the purpose.
3. A duly accomplished signature card containing the specimen signature of its authorized signatories validated by the Corporate Secretary and verified by its broker (the name of the broker and the broker's signature must be specified) or officer of the bank (the name of the bank and the bank's officer must be specified) where he is maintaining an account.

For the convenience of Scrip Shareholders based in Visayas and Mindanao, the Subject Shares may be tendered by submitting the foregoing requirements at the Cebu and Davao branch offices of the Depository no later than 21 March 2006.

ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (Cebu Branch)
Room 206, Cebu Holdings Center
Cebu Business Park, Cebu City
Telephone No.: (63)(32) 231-1324
Contact Person: Cheryl M. Lim-Go

If you are an INDIVIDUAL SHAREHOLDER, please submit the following:

1. Two (2) valid identification cards containing the photo and specimen signature of the shareholder.
2. For shareholders acting through an attorney-in-fact, a duly notarized Special Power of Attorney substantially in the form prescribed by the Bidder (N.B. Endorsement of stock certificate/s must be made by the shareholder himself).
3. A duly accomplished signature card containing the specimen signature of the shareholder and verified by his broker (the name of the broker and the broker's signature must be specified) or officer of the bank (the name of the bank and the bank's officer must be specified) where he is maintaining an account.

For the convenience of Scrip Shareholders based in Visayas and Mindanao, the Subject Shares may be tendered by submitting the foregoing requirements at the Cebu and Davao branch offices of the Depository no later than 21 March 2006.

ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (Davao Branch)
Dr. #7 M.T. Aquino Building, Cabagato Avenue
corner Bolcan Street, Davao City
Telephone No.: (63)(82) 224-2860
Contact Person: Miguel Luis R. Aquino

After said date, Scrip Shareholders in Visayas and Mindanao may tender their respective Subject Shares only with the Depository's head office in Makati City.

The Depository will submit the share certificates for validation to KPM's Stock Transfer Agent, Securities Transfer Services, Inc., c/o Mr. Antonio R. Galvez, 4th Floor Benpres Building, Exchange Road corner Meralco Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, tel. (632) 449-6165 or (632) 449-6188. Defective applications (e.g., with discrepancy between the specimen signatures on file and the endorsement) must be corrected within the Tender Offer Period to avoid being rejected by the Bidder. Hence, Shareholders are strongly urged against tendering at the last minute to allow sufficient time to correct any deficiency in their application. Shareholders are also urged to indicate their telephone numbers in their respective application forms to allow the Depository to inform them immediately of any deficiency in their applications.

Tendering Shareholders whose shares are lodged with the Philippine Central Depository Nominee Corporation ("PCD") ("Scripteles Shareholders") should instruct their brokers to electronically transfer their shares to ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "Broker") for receipt by the Broker prior to 4:00 p.m. of March 28, 2006. The Broker shall hold the tendered common shares only as custodian for said shares. Tendering Shareholders shall have the right to withdraw any tendered shares at any time during the Tender Offer Period. For a withdrawal to be effective, a written notice of withdrawal must be received by the Depository (for Scrip Shareholders) or by the Broker (for Scripteles Shareholders) before 4:00 p.m. of March 28, 2006.

Copies of SEC Form 19-1 may be obtained by Shareholders from the Depository/Broker at their addresses stated above. For inquiries about the Bidder or the Tender Offer, please contact Ms. Nilda S. Enriquez of the Depository at its address set forth earlier in this letter.

(PIN - March 1, 2 & 3, 2006)

By Tarry V. Quismundo

A MAKATI COURT ISSUED ARREST WARRANTS yesterday against former Sen. Gregorio Honasan and six other people accused of conspiring with junior military officers who staged the short-lived Oakwood Mutiny in Makati nearly three years ago.

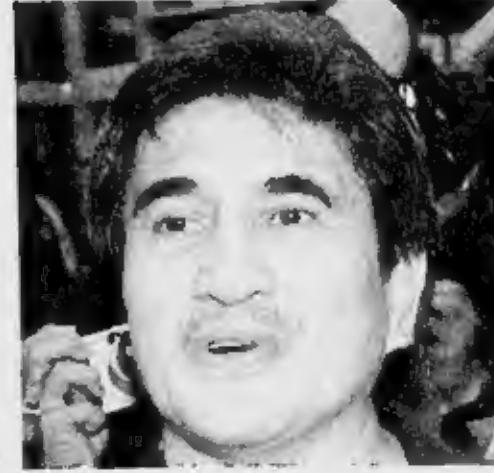
Judge Cesar Santamaría of the Makati Regional Trial Court issued the warrants five days after the Department of Justice filed coup d'état charges against Honasan and the others. He also scheduled a hearing on Friday of a DOJ motion to consolidate their case into the ongoing trial of the Oakwood mutineers known also as the Magdalo group.

The charge of coup d'état is not bailable.

Sought to be arrested besides Honasan, leader of various failed coup attempts against President Corazon Aquino, were four retired military officers — Colonels Ernesto Macahaya, Virgilio Briones and Romeo Lazo and Capt. Felix Turingan — and two members of Honasan's staff at the Senate identified as George Dulduao and Lina Reyes.

The retired officers were identified as members of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc., a fraternity of active and retired military and police officials founded by Honasan.

The arrest order against Honasan said that the former senator, described by the charge sheet as "kuya" or big brother to the Oakwood mutineers, may be arrested at his address at No. 1 President Marcos Street, Industrial Valley Subdivision, Marikina City, "or elsewhere."



HONASAN

The coup d'état charges against him and the six others were filed by the DOJ just a few hours after President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a state of national emergency last Friday. The DOJ said it had conducted a preliminary investigation that established probable cause to take them to trial for their role in the July 27 takeover by mutinous soldiers of the Oakwood Premier apartment-hotel in Makati City.

In response to a request the Philippine National Police filed Monday, Judge Santamaría also issued an order informing the PNP's Detection and Special Operations Division that an arrest warrant has been issued against Honasan.

Honasan was on a list of 12 personalities about whom the PNP had requested a court verification of pending warrants. The list included party-list members of the House of Representatives who are currently under the chamber's protective custody, and other leaders of leftist organizations.

More protest rallies defy GMA order

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PROTESTERS, MOSTLY MILITANTS AND students, yesterday marched to the EDSA Shrine in open defiance of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 which banned street protests and vowed to stage more rallies until the controversial proclamation was lifted.

"We will assert our hard-won right to peaceful assembly and free speech. In the coming days, militant groups together with middle forces and human rights advocates will lead daily protest actions," the militant group Sanlakas said in a statement.

Former Vice President Teofisto Guingona said he would support future protests challenging PP 1017 which declared a state of emergency nationwide.

"What the students and the faculty of the University of the Philippines did is already being replicated in other schools," Guingona also said.

On Tuesday, students and faculty members of UP walked out of their classes in protest of PP 1017 and urged other schools to do the same until the state of emergency is lifted.

Yesterday, about 1,000 protesters marched to

the Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel on EDSA corner Ortigas Avenue but were blocked by anti-riot policemen.

Four days before, a bigger group held a two-hour rally against Ms Arroyo at the EDSA Shrine on Friday.

Rally organizers estimated the crowd at 3,000.

"Tonight, we come together to continue reaffirming our call to (Ms Arroyo) to make the supreme sacrifice and to resign voluntarily," the mass organizers said in a leaflet.

The protesters first gathered in front of the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan before Guingona, former social welfare secretary Dinky Soliman and party list representatives led them in marching to the EDSA Shrine.

The protesters arrived at the shrine before 5:30 p.m. but were not allowed to step on the vicinity of the church by about a hundred policemen.

Tension rose when the protesters started pushing the lines of policemen. But they were pacified when their leaders were allowed to enter the chapel and attend the ongoing mass briefly.

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Lomibao: No plot in Peping's house

By Philip C. Tuba

THERE WAS NO "CONSPIRATORIAL" MEETING at the house of Jose "Peping" Cojuangco on the eve of the alleged coup attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao said yesterday.

Lomibao said that Cojuangco and Pastor "Boy" Saycon were not yet being investigated although Saycon admitted to the PNP chief that he called Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, alleged to have been involved in the suspected coup plot, that night.

Lomibao said his evaluation of the gathering at the Cojuangco residence was that it "was not conspiratorial."

"There's no custodial investigation going on. I think they were requested by the authorities to just explain," Lomibao told reporters during a break at the PNP budget hearing in the Senate.

"And I think we will not proceed against them because [according] to my evaluation, I think there's nothing really conspiratorial [about the meeting]," he said.

Malacafang earlier ordered an investigation of Cojuangco and Saycon after the international weekly news magazine Time reported that one of its reporters, Nelly Sindayen, had witnessed a meeting at Cojuangco's home last Thursday in which a possible coup plot had been discussed.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he had ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to invite Sindayen so she could provide the details about the supposed meeting "where a possible plan for withdrawal of support from President Arroyo was being discussed."

Time article

The Time article said that more than a dozen middle-level politicians and business men were going in and out of the meeting.

It also said that Saycon had spoken over a speaker phone to a Washington official and to Lim, who is now in military custody after informing Armed Forces Chief Gen. Generoso Senga that he and other officials were going to withdraw support from Ms Arroyo.

Gonzalez said he has yet to confirm a report that Sindayen had been advised by her lawyer not to report to the NBI.

Cojuangco, head of the Philippine Olympic Committee, is a younger brother of former President Aquino who has called for the President to step down.

Cojuangco and Saycon denied having "helped Lim to plot the ouster of Ms Arroyo."

Cojuangco said the meeting in his house was about finalizing plans for the EDSA anniversary celebration. Saycon attended the meeting as a member of the EDSA commission.

Not off the hook

Gonzalez said Saycon and Cojuangco were not yet off the hook even if they denied the story.

"Everybody knows that a disclaimer is like alibi. It's the weakest of all defenses," said Gonzalez, who joined the weekly news conference of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita in Malacafang.

But while the Time story was itself evidence, it needed to be supported by other evidence, especially since Cojuangco and Saycon have denied the story, said Gonzalez.

The fact that the article mentioned the



COJUANGCO

presence of businessmen in the meeting was important because they could be the "financial supporters of the coup," he said.

Ermita said that Saycon had called him and even wrote him a letter to deny the Time article and "explained circumstances that led to the meeting in the house of Cojuangco."

Asked whether he was convinced, Ermita said it would be best to wait for the results of Gonzalez's investigation.

But he noted that since Saycon had had previous involvement in such coup talks, it was even more necessary to investigate the present case.

Cojuangco's wife, Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco, yesterday denied that those who went to her house on the night of Feb. 23 were hatching a coup.

No conspiracy

"There was no conspiracy in my home. They can arrest Boy Saycon but not my husband," said Tingting, who was at the Senate to attend the budget hearings of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

"I cannot control what my guests, invited or uninvited, say in my house. But why my husband? Boy is on his own. He was the one who went to my house," she said.

She said that she was not home when the meeting occurred and only learned about it from her husband and from the Time magazine report.

"My husband is an appointee of the President so we certainly wouldn't do that... There's no truth to the allegations. In fact, my husband has been so occupied with sports we haven't attended any rallies," she said.

"But it does not mean to say that we don't have friends visiting us. And whatever they say, we can't control their mouths," she added.

Tingting said she welcomed the investigation so that she and her husband can clear their names.

"We have nothing to be worried about and I'm grateful to the President for putting me in my position and recognizing that a woman can do a man's job," she said. Tingting is president of the Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC).

She said she and her husband continued to support Ms Arroyo although her sister-in-law had asked for the President's resignation.

"We haven't spoken to (Mrs. Aquino). That's her point of view," she said. *With a report from Christine Avendaño*

Proclamation 1017 reunites divided Church

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S state of emergency declaration may just have the effect of unifying Church-based organizations and religious organizations previously divided over the unresolved political crisis.

With the declaration and the allegedly "warrantless arrests and detention and the gag order on the media," Church people would not find it difficult to unite, said Sister Crescencia Lucero, executive director of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines.

"We will defy 1017 by going out in

the streets," Lucero said at a forum at St. Joseph's College in Quezon City yesterday which tackled Proclamation No. 1017 and its implications for Philippine democracy.

It was attended by representatives from the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) and ecumenical movements Sinag and Kaalagad—all agreed that the proclamation was an affront to civil liberties.

Lucero said members of the institutional church and congregations had

been clearly divided on how to best deal with allegations that Ms Arroyo had stolen the 2004 elections.

When the AMRSP came out with a statement calling on Ms Arroyo to resign last year, it met with opposition from other member congregations which said they had not been properly consulted on the decision.

The same division was manifested among Catholic bishops last year, with some being vocal in their opposition to the President but many more largely silent about the political crisis.

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Mild quake jolts RP

AN EARTHQUAKE jolted Metro Manila last night but there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries.

The Hong Kong Observatory recorded a magnitude 5.7 quake in Manila at 19:07 (1107 GMT), said Woo Wang-chun, a science officer at the observatory. No exact location of the epicenter was immediately given.

Renato Solidum, director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, said the location and the magnitude could not immediately be determined because heavy rains at the time hampered satellite transmissions.

"So far we have no report of any significant incidents in other places," he said in a radio interview.

He said the tremor was "a bit strong" on Lubang Island, 130 kilometers southwest of Manila, and also felt in several suburbs. Earthquakes felt in those areas in the past were centered along the Manila Trench west of the capital, he said. AP

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Erap admits giving P8M to Rangers ...

From page A1
soldiers went to his Tanay rest-house asking for money for their Christmas parties and gift-giving.

Solicitation letter

Defensor said Estrada agreed to give them money so long as they made it formal. "He (Estrada) asked them to give a formal letter of solicitation so that he could give the money in the form of a formal donation with proper documentation," Defensor said.

Estrada claimed to have used his Saludo sa Kawayan Pilipino Foundation which he established shortly after the military's takeover of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Camp Abu Bakar in Mindanao to provide relief to the soldiers and their families.

Defensor said the foundation was headed by Estrada's son-in-law, Manuel "Beaver" Lopez.

Defensor said Estrada might have "unwittingly" provided financial assistance to the rebels soldiers but he would not say if the government would file charges or investigate the matter further.

On Friday, Defensor claimed that the government had received intelligence

reports that Estrada had been in constant touch with the Scout Rangers' commander, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, several days before the allegedly aborted coup plot was to have been carried out on Feb. 24.

Malacafang claimed to have nipped in the bud a plot to overthrow the President involving a contingent of armed soldiers, mainly from the Scout Rangers and the Marines, joining a People Power commemoration rally and then announcing a military withdrawal of support from her administration.

Transparent deal

Asked for comment on Defensor's disclosure, Estrada immediately acknowledged making the donations.

"It was properly received and payment was done through checks," he said. "The whole deal was transparent and with a paper trail. If the money was meant for a revolution, it should have been in cash."

"(The soldiers) asked for help and we just gave it to them," Estrada said.

Estrada said he already explained the motive behind the donations to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno who paid him a visit yesterday.

"We also talked about possible reconciliation between me and (President Macapagal-Arroyo). As for reports linking me to destabilization efforts, Secretary Puno knows that I'm not involved in any such thing," Estrada said.

Not the first time

Estrada said the donations last December to members of the Armed Forces were not the first.

"We've been giving donations through the foundation even before," Estrada said.

He added that the Saludo sa Kawayan Pilipino Foundation was now processing a donation for hospital equipment intended for the Armed Forces' medical center on V. Luna Avenue in Quezon City.

"I'm the chairman emeritus of the foundation. I am the only one who can tell (my son-in-law) Beaver where to donate the money," Estrada said.

Estrada said that the foundation started raising funds for the benefit of the soldiers when he was still the President and continued to provide assistance "whenever soldiers ask for support because the fund is dedicated to them."

Puno, who had served as Estrada's interior and local government secretary, told the Inquirer in a separate interview that he had heard about the donations but felt "too queasy" about bringing it up during the meeting with his former boss.

"But then he started talking about his foundation and what it has done," Puno said.

Continuing dialogue

Puno said his visit was to catch up with the former President, whom he described as a friend, and to discuss with the deposed leader his alleged involvement in destabilization attempts and possible reconciliation with Ms Arroyo.

"Of course I had to discuss with him the report linking their group to destabilization efforts. We're friends, so at least there's little room for misunderstanding when I report to (Ms Arroyo)," Puno said.

Puno said he and Estrada agreed on the need for a continuing dialogue. But the newest member of Ms Arroyo's Cabinet said he would not stand in the way should the government decide to proceed against the former President. With a report from Nelson R. Flores

Battle-scarred Marines teary-eyed as chief goes

From page A1

never be involved in activities at EDSA.

"Our mandate is to protect everybody. If you go to EDSA, you will just be protecting a segment of the population. That is not our mandate," he said.

Also present at the turnover ceremonies were Col. Ed Ducusin, commander of the 2nd Marine Brigade based in Iligan, and the commanders of four Marine battalions.

Conspicuously absent was Col. Juancho Sabban, commander of the 3rd Marine Brigade based in Jolo.

Ducusin, however, refused to give a statement, saying a "gag order" was given on Monday.

Respected officer

In his acceptance remarks, Marcelino praised his predecessor as "a very respected officer of the Marine Corps" whom the troops "will miss so much."

Holding back his emotions, Marcelino assured Querubin "we will cultivate what you have planted."

Col. Emmanuel Salamat, commanding officer of the 8th Marine Battalion, described Querubin as a "strong-willed leader and risk-taker who has very specific command guidance."

"We are really sad because we are losing a very, very good officer," lamented Salamat.

He said the Marines had no inkling of Querubin's actions in Manila, saying they learned about it on TV.

Seemingly belying Querubin's suspected involvement in the foiled coup, Salamat said: "He did not recruit us."

Aguinaldo pep talk

In Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, the Armed Forces top brass gathered 400 junior officers and enlisted personnel at a forum called "Talakayan sa campo" for a pep talk on "loyalty, military discipline and professionalism." The affair was closed to reporters.

"There is always a point in our career when one experiences a vacuum and finds himself not happy anymore. It is at this point when one has to make a choice of coexisting in pain or leave in order to find meaning in one's life to live by your principles," Querubin said as he broke down in tears.

Neither Dolorfino nor Querubin referred to the events over the weekend as a coup or a mutiny. Dolorfino merely referred to it as "the turn of events in Manila."

"We are confident that Colonel Querubin will be able to clear his name from the accusations. We are looking forward that he will be able to come back and resume his duty as brigade commander," Dolorfino said.

Marcelino was named acting brigade commander.

Dolorfino blamed "politics" for divisions in the Marines and stressed that the Marines should

"It is the business of the Filipino people to resolve these issues," said Hill, who visited the US-funded Computer Literacy and Internet Program in Barangay Talisayan here. With reports from Dona Z. Passibugan in Manila; Julie S. Alipala, Grace Cantal-Albasin and Franklin M. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ConCom member hits Cha-Cha

From page A1
now have been opposed by Congress for downgrading the interim Parliament. But they have not. Developments leave me no doubt (Ms Arroyo) herself is pushing these provisions," Paterno said.

Motive behind Cha-cha
"I have notified members of the former ConCom that I dissociate myself from all ConCom activities and will oppose Charter change," Paterno said.

Paterno zoomed in on the ConCom's transitory provisions under Article XX, Sections 7,9 and 11 to 13.

Paterno cited Section 9 which states that Cabinet members will not be elected MPs but will be appointed by the President, and one-third of them shall become MPs only by her appointment.

Under the same section, 30 persons, presumably experts in various fields, will also be named MPs by the President to the interim parliament.

"(The ConCom) transitory provisions clearly define the strong motivation for Mrs. Arroyo's determined efforts to get Cha-cha ratified," he added.

According to Paterno's e-mail, it appears that his problem with the ConCom draft also lies with the proposed transitory provisions that mandate the cancellation of elections in 2007 and with the continued incumbency of all members of the Senate and the House of Representatives as members of parliament until 2010.

To do GMA's bidding

"The No-El provision (assures) that the interim Parliament (from 2007 to 2010) will be filled with tried and proven allies, ready to do (Ms Arroyo's) bidding," Paterno said.

He also has problems with the proposed provisions that would give Ms Arroyo the powers and privileges of both the President and the Prime Minister.

Both president, PM

"In a normal parliamentary system, the head of government is the Prime Minister.... The President's duties are ceremonial—to open Parliament, dissolve it upon advice of the Prime Minister, greet new ambassadors, be the symbol of national unity as head of state," Paterno said.

Under the ConCom's proposed Cha-cha revision, Ms Arroyo would be both President and Prime Minister upon the ratification of the new Charter in 2007 until all terms end in 2010.

Same powers as Marcos

"In my interpellation to oppose these provisions in ConCom, I asked if these were not the same powers that Marcos gave himself. (The) spontaneous answer by the sponsor of the provision Raul Lambino (was) yes," Paterno said.

He said the co-chairs of the new body assigned to promote Cha-cha were the main sponsors of what he alleged to be onerous provisions—lawyers Romela Bengzon and Lambino.

Pun's advocacy

"The appointment of (erstwhile Antipolo Rep. Ronaldo Puno) to (the Department of Interior and Local Government), given his well known dagdag-bawas and other election distorting skills, further confirms to us that GMA will leave no stone unturned for Cha-cha ... to be ratified by any means," Paterno said.

Puno, upon his assumption of

the DILG portfolio, admitted that he had been pushing Charter change in the House but his new job makes such an advocacy take the back seat to issues of public safety and order.

"We are in a national emergency. To suggest that I assumed the position to push for Cha-cha shows a failure to understand the current situation," Puno said.

Only reference material

The House committee on constitutional amendments chaired by Rep. Constantino Jaraula has dropped the ConCom draft and is reportedly only using it as a "reference material."

No-El dropped

The No-El provision for senators and congressmen who'd be made members of the interim parliament has been dropped.

In its place was Article 18, Section 1 that says only senators elected in May 2004 would go on to become members of the interim parliament until 2010. All congressmen and senators whose terms will expire in 2007 would have to go through elections.

Neither Dolorfino nor Querubin referred to the events over the weekend as a coup or a mutiny. Dolorfino merely referred to it as "the turn of events in Manila."

"We are confident that Colonel Querubin will be able to clear his name from the accusations. We are looking forward that he will be able to come back and resume his duty as brigade commander," Dolorfino said.

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Dolorfino blamed "politics" for divisions in the Marines and stressed that the Marines should

Media still have to follow guidelines ...

From page A1
to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Gonzalez yesterday disclosed the Palace plan to forge a modus vivendi or feasible arrangement with the Philippine media even as more journalists here and abroad denounced what they described as an assault on press freedom under President Macapagal-Arroyo's emergency declaration.

About 100 members of the National Press Club and the Alayansa ng Pilipinong Mama-hayag held a rally in front of the NPC building in Intramuros, Manila. At least 10 journalists shaved their heads to dramatize their protest over the police raid on the offices of The Daily Tribune, a small newspaper critical of the Arroyo administration.

The Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) also sent a protest letter to Ms Arroyo on Wednesday, a few days after the Saturday raid as well as the deployment of troops around the compounds of the largest TV networks, ABS-CBN and GMA 7.

"The IFJ has concerns that media freedom and civil liberties are the biggest casualties of the state of emergency," Christopher Warren, the federation's president, said in the letter to Ms Arroyo.

"It is unacceptable for the government to be warning media sources to report only one side of the emergency," Warren said. According to the IFJ, it represents about 500,000 journalists worldwide.

tution and hallowed by tradition. The exercise of the emergency powers does not suspend the Bill of Rights. Prior restraint on the press is anathema to a democratic way of life," the PPI said.

"That no newspaper has been closed down and no journalist has been hauled off to jail do not make the assaults on the press any less repugnant. The intent is to intimidate."

The statement was adopted during the PPI's regular board meeting yesterday. The organization is composed of representatives of major newspapers and print media groups in the country.

The Washington-based Radio-Television News Directors Association also issued a statement calling on Ms Arroyo "to rescind measures she has taken to limit press freedom in her country."

"President Arroyo's actions could usher in a new era of press censorship and intimidation," said Barbara Cochran, RTNDA president.

End intimidation

"Freedom of expression is one of the most important freedoms for a democracy. To close down a media outlet tramples on that freedom. We join journalists in the Philippines and around the world to call for an end to the intimidation of the press," she added.

RTNDA chair Dan Shelley had just returned from the Philippines where he spent a week training radio and television journalists in Manila, Cebu City and Davao City.

According to the RTNDA, it is the world's largest professional organization devoted exclusively to electronic journalism. The RTNDA represents local and network news executives in broadcasting, cable and other electronic media in more than 30 countries. Reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Alcuin Papa, Luige A. del Puerto, Tina G. Santos, Philip Tubero, AP and AFP

and named because of standing gag orders.

The officer said the husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo used the camp's "wardroom" to entertain his guests, mostly election officials, before the May 2004 poll.

The room has wide glass windows that overlook Marawi City and the breath-taking Lake Lanao. In the middle of the room are two long tables covered with red tablecloth. A TV set and a video player are on one side of the wall.

The wardroom is one of several structures clustered atop the Signal Hill, a leafy elevation accessible by a winding road. Beneath the hill are the barracks, offices and training ground for the Marines.

Used for illegal activities

But Marines were still sore about how their "wardroom" was used for illegal activities," the senior officer said "because there were others who also used the ward room for the same activities."

Mike A didn't go to Marawi? Tell that to the Marines

From page A1

balls at the TV set showing Arroyo's lawyer Jesus Santos issuing a denial and yelled "liar," said one senior officer.

This was after the testimony in October last year of Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani before a Senate committee looking into the alleged involvement of military officers in the 2004 balloting, revealed in the "Hello Garc!" wiretaps.

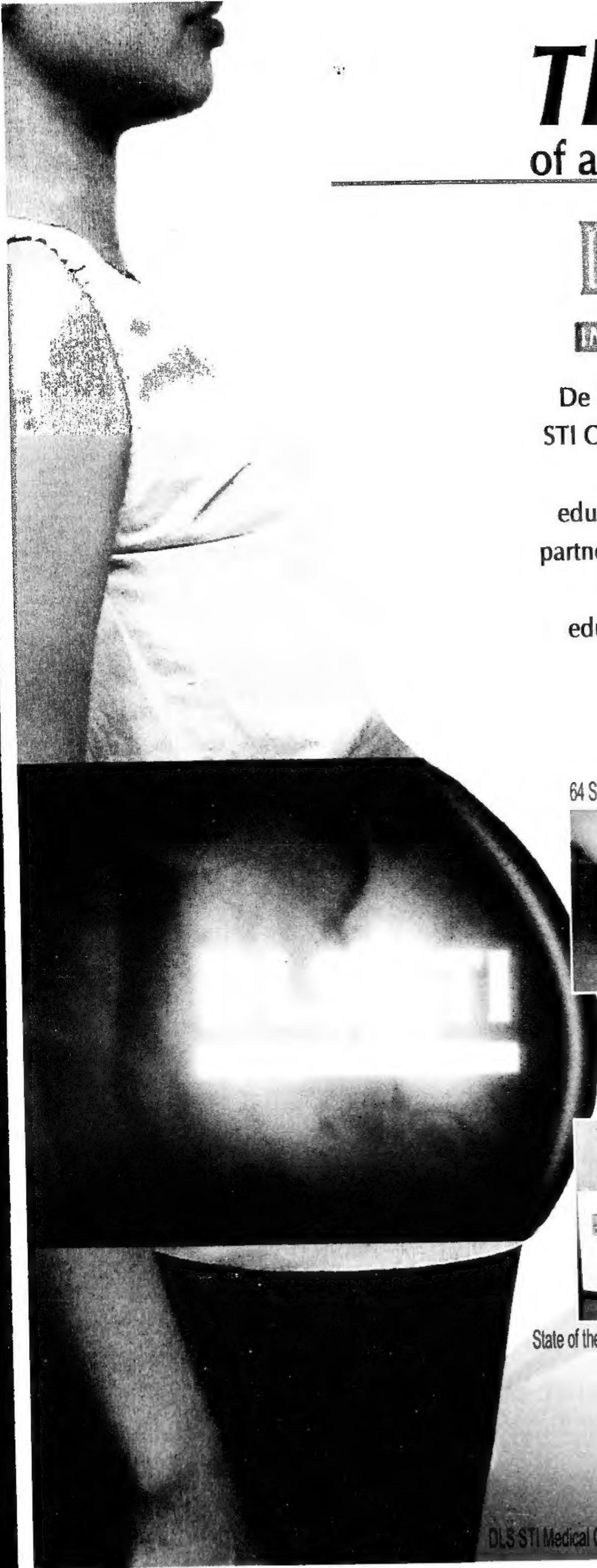
Gudani testified shortly before his retirement.

His testimony centered on his relief as brigade commander based in Marawi, ostensibly after he reportedly rejected suggestions that he manipulate the vote.

Moneybag

Gudani told the committee headed by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon that Arroyo had gone to Marawi carrying bags containing P500 million which he allegedly used to bribe election officials.

"These soldiers provided him security, so they were sure he was here," said the officer, who declined to be



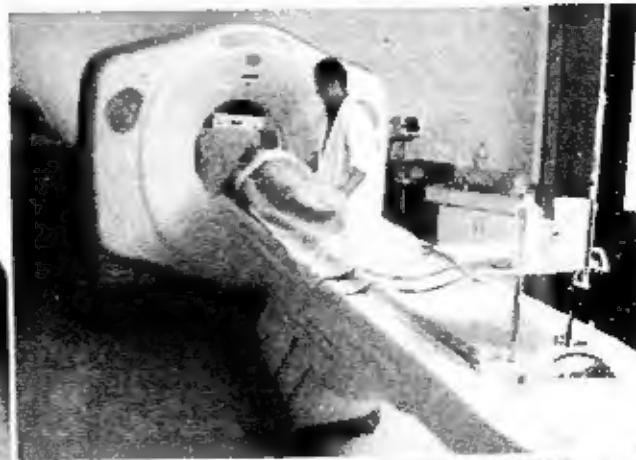
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Death for ex-lawmaker, 'Mamburao 6'

From page A1

the brothers on Dec. 13, 1997 in Mamburao.

She said the testimony of one of the accused, farmer Eduardo Hermoso, corroborated other evidence linking them to the crime, even though Hermoso later retracted his statement, claiming he had been tortured into making it.

Yadao gave little weight to Hermoso's retraction, which she said was done under dubious circumstances. She noted that Hermoso had applied for the government's witness protection program, but, when nothing came of it, he retracted.

"Unfair, the judgment is unfair," a stoic Villarosa told reporters as he walked out of the courtroom, handcuffed and escorted by jail guards.

At his side was his wife, Occi-

dental Mindoro Rep. Amelita Villarosa, who slammed the decision for not giving credence to her husband's alibi that he had been in the House of Representatives when a meeting between him and the gunmen was supposed to have taken place in Mindoro before the murder.

The other convicted farmers, who were alleged members of the communist New People's Army, were Josue Ungsoc, Manolito Matricio, Mario Tobias, Ruben Balaguer and Gelito Bautista.

Their family members wept upon hearing the decision and hugged them as they were escorted to the van that would take them to the National Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City.

A number of militants from the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas condemned the alleged injustice done to the farmers.

Court documents showed that the Quintos brothers were attending a friend's birthday celebration in Mamburao when gunmen disrupted the festivities and killed the two.

The elder Quintos, a delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention, immediately accused Villarosa of masterminding the killings, claiming the murders were politically motivated. Villarosa denied the accusation, saying Quintos was not a threat to his political career (Quintos lost a congressional seat to Villarosa in the 1992 and 1995 elections.)

Villarosa said the murders could have stemmed from a land dispute involving the Quintoses that displaced farmers of the 600-hectare Golden Country Farms Inc. (GCFI) in Mamburao, which Michael had managed.

On Dec. 22, 1997, the Inquirer received an unsigned fax message

from someone claiming to be an NPA member that said Michael had been killed because of alleged injustices against GCFI tenants. The sender added that the killing of Paul, a 31-year-old economist based in Makati, was accidental.

The claims were supported by Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, who announced over radio station dzMM in January 1998 that the murders were part of the group's revolutionary justice for the farmers. Quintos insisted his family treated peasants fairly.

Seven gunmen

On Dec. 22, 1997, Eduardo Hermoso was arrested. He said in a statement that he acted as one of the nine lookouts. He accused Villarosa of masterminding the murders that reportedly also involved seven gunmen and the congress-

man's driver and police escort.

His statement would lead to the arrest of Villarosa and the rest of the "Mamburao Six."

But Hermoso later said he had been arrested without warrant by the National Bureau of Investigation agents, detained inside the Quintos residence and tortured into signing a prepared statement.

Bail

In February 1998, on the complainants motion, the Supreme Court transferred the double-murder case from Mamburao to the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

On April 28, 1998, Branch 76 Judge Monina Zefarosa granted Villarosa, Bautista and Balaguer bail, although murder is a non-bailable offense.

Villarosa posted bail and was released the same day after 111 days of detention.

Following a motion from the prosecution, Zefarosa inhibited herself from the case in September 1998. It was re-arranged to two branches, but the judges also inhibited themselves. The case was finally re-arranged to Yadao's sala.

In 2001, Villarosa defeated Quintos in the gubernatorial race. Quintos served as congressman for 10 months in the 11th Congress after he won in recount against Villarosa's wife.

President Macapagal-Arroyo approved in October 2001 the release on recognition of the "Mamburao Six" as a confidence-building measure to help restart peace talks with the communist-led National Democratic Front.

But Yadao denied the motion for their release. The decision was criticized by militants who maintained the six were political detainees.

Senate report: GMA accountable for P728-M fertilizer scam

From page A1

took part in the "illegal dissipation" of the fund.

Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio said the committee report was politically motivated.

"A highly politicized and vengeful forum such as the series of Senate hearings on the fertilizer issue can hardly be relied upon to render a fair judgment on the accountability of the President on this matter," Claudio said.

He said the hearings were intended as a continuation in the Senate of the failed impeachment case against Ms Arroyo in the House of Representatives.

President Chief of Staff Michael Defensor welcomed the report. "That's good that they now took it out from the political witch-hunt and is now at its proper forum," he said.

Defensor expressed confidence that the case against the President would be dismissed.

"The agriculture department is

only an implementing agency of the local and congressional officials who were the ones tasked with identifying and ensuring implementation," he said. "I have full trust and confidence that they implemented this with utmost efficiency."

GMA benefited the most

The agriculture and blue ribbon committees challenged the President "to break her silence and put together the pieces of the puzzle" in the scam.

"To this date, no effort on her part has been made, no categorical denial was even heard. But all allegations and testimony point to her benefiting the most in an intricate scheme of deception and fraud. Only this much the committee of the Senate know: That the fertilizer fund was misused. It was corrupted. It was intended to assure her victory. Mrs. President, could it be true?" the committee asked.

In their report, the committee noted that testimony by former Solicitor General Frank Chavez, the

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and other farmers' organizations and former Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin showed that the fund was indeed used to ensure Ms Arroyo's victory in 2004.

Boncodin had testified that Ms Arroyo may have had knowledge of Bolante's request for release of the fertilizer fund in February 2004, months before the election, to the Department of Agriculture.

Boncodin testimony

The testimony "stands and remains uncontested in legislative records," the committee said.

"The accusation against her (Ms Arroyo) is so serious that it places the position of the presidency in the balance. The Palace looks at the issue as a mere political tool. Its refusal to cooperate violates the spirit of democracy, promotes tyranny and breeds the ground for instability; it has in fact stirred," they said.

"Failure to disprove the charges, even resorting to shield those directly responsible for squandering taxpayers' money,

suggests her culpability and involvement in this unforgivable act made against our poor farmers."

Magsaysay presented the committee report to the plenary last night. Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago abstained from signing the report.

Plunder

The committee said Bolante, Lorenzo, Poliquit, Gonzales, Montes and all regional directors of the agriculture department "must be charged" with violating the law on plunder and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, they said.

"In the fertilizer fund scam, Undersecretary Bolante is the declared architect. He designed it. He was its brains. It was he who worked with the DBM for the immediate release of the fund. It was he who prepared and submitted names who would become the fertilizer fund's proponents," the committee said.

Gonzales herself admitted that it was Bolante who issued orders

for the release of some P100 million to the recipients, according to the committee.

"Based on the investigation ... there appears massive misappropriation, diversion of funds, malversation of public funds and raids on the farmers' money," they noted.

"In the case of Bolante, testimony to the effect that he received, directly or indirectly, commission and a percentage of the pecuniary benefit from suppliers in connection with the contracts and transactions pertaining to the fertilizer fund have been adduced during public hearings," the committee said.

Lorenzo and Gonzales served as cosignatories of Bolante in the transfer of the fund from the agriculture department to the regional field units. Montes served as the program's spokesperson, according to the committee.

Suppliers in cahoots

The suppliers in the private sector who worked "in cahoots" with

the agriculture officials to amass ill-gotten wealth from the fund by overpricing and supplying substandard and diluted fertilizers should likewise be charged with plunder, the committee said.

The committee also recommended that the contempt order against Bolante, who had defied an arrest order for him to appear in the hearings, be enforced, and that Lorenzo and Poliquit, who also snubbed the hearings, be held in contempt.

"The fertilizer fund scam will never be closed without the testimony of its brains and implementor—Jocelyn Bolante," the committee said.

"Both of them have absconded by leaving for the United States, avoiding the public hearings for the purpose," they said.

The committee recommended the total overhaul of the Department of Agriculture, noting that the department worked "in such a way as a mafia or syndicate is operating it." *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

GMA conditions terms for lifting emergency edict

From page A1

former Rep. Jose Cajunangco and civil society member Pastor Saycon had conspired to stage a "mutiny" led by Marines. (See related story on Page A3.)

But Gonzalez said the lifting of the proclamation would not set back government efforts to go after enemies of the state. "Present laws, even in the absence of [PP] 1017, may be used to prosecute individuals for rebellion or inciting to sedition," he said.

Lomibao was noncommittal, saying his recommendation would depend on "the circumstances on the ground."

"I can't definitely say the situation has [become] completely normal," he told reporters during the noon break of the Senate budget hearings.

He described the situation as "very volatile" and "still fluid."

Lomibao said the PNP could not be rushed into recommending the lifting of PP 1017.

"We're still continuing evaluation and monitoring of so-called antigovernment forces, basically the Communist Party of the Philippines, who have conspired with the so-called Magdalo officers and their cohorts in bringing down this government," he said.

In a statement, the PNP said it had directed regional field commanders and chiefs of key units to assess the security situation.

AmCham stand

"The peace and order situation and the status of the current investigation and efforts to account for those involved in the failed ef-

fort to overthrow the government will be the primary consideration for the recommendation," it said.

Ms Arroyo made her announcement as lawmakers, members of the media and other groups continued to assail her declaration of a state of emergency starting on Feb. 24 in response to an alleged coup plot.

Even the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Inc. (AmCham), has called for an immediate end to emergency rule.

"The foreign investment community hopes that the state of national emergency will be lifted as soon as possible," it said in a Feb. 28 statement.

The Makati-based AmCham, which counts some 600 companies and individuals as members in the country, is apparently the first private expatriate group here to air an official stand on the political crisis.

"The American business community deeply regrets the current resurgence of political instability in the Philippines and urges an early and peaceful resolution within the rule of law, with full respect for human rights," it said.

It urged all Filipinos to find peaceful ways to resolve their political differences and to move forward to implementing solutions to the urgent challenges of national economic development.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, president of the United Opposition, said: "Let's all pray that the police would tell Ms Arroyo what is true and what is based on the real situation ... As I always say, a good decision is based on good information."

"Not only do I hope that she is given proper information, I also hope she would listen to what would hopefully be correct information."

Factual basis

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermata said that just as there was a "factual basis" for the issuance of PP 1017, Ms Arroyo also wanted to be convinced that there was basis to lift it.

"We should be able to give some insights [on] how we are now, where we are, what are these threats, are they still present, and will they cause trouble for us," Ermata said in his weekly news conference.

Gonzalez said that while the Cabinet and the President had been having daily assessment meetings since Feb. 24, it was Ms Arroyo who decided to announce what she intended to do with PP 1017.

"That's her own decision. [The other] night she assessed the pros and cons that we have been discussing ... the assessments of hawks like me," Gonzalez said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President went on nationwide TV and radio "to inform the Filipino people ... the real score."

Bunye and Ermata denied that Ms Arroyo was pressured to do so when she met the other day with visiting US State Assistant Secretary Christopher Hill.

Crackdown to continue

Asked if the crackdown on Ms Arroyo's political enemies would continue even after the lifting of PP 1017, Ermata said: "Well, definitely, even before 1017 was issued by the President, authorities

have been doing this, as you said, crackdown. But to us, [we will] continue to monitor the situation through intelligence work and take appropriate steps so situations that are not to our liking will not build up."

Gonzalez said the crackdown would continue even after the lifting of PP 1017 because investigations would have started by then.

"You cannot stop in the middle; you have to proceed..." he said. "And in proceeding with the investigation, names and incidents may come in that we have not anticipated at this point."

PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said the PNP would continue to go after those involved in the supposed coup plot under the principle of "continuing crime."

"The gathering of evidence is not dictated by the existence of a state of emergency, and neither will the charges of rebellion against people considered to be enemies of the state slacken," Pagdilao said.

Upbeat stock market

Businessmen and investors welcomed Ms Arroyo's announcement that she would lift emergency rule within 72 hours given satisfactory conditions.

The stock market itself modestly cheered the announcement, ending 12.3 points or 0.6 percent higher to close at 2,135.27.

The value of shares traded hit P1.28 billion, with net foreign buying at P307 million.

"Ending the state of emergency would have been better [to wipe out uncertainty]. Setting a time frame was the next best thing," Gonzalez said.

Legarda said PP 1017 was "a baseless and useless legal scarecrow."

"The premises of the proclamation do not exist," he said. "There is no clear and present danger to the state and the Filipino people. There is no conspiracy to topple the government."

Legarda also said the allegation

that Jojo Gonzales, president of the Philippine Equity Partners Inc.

Teresita Sy, heiress of mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr., told reporters that political and security threats had taken a toll on the retail business.

But she was quick to stress that she welcomed Ms Arroyo's plan to lift PP 1017.

"I think she knows what to do," Sy said. "I am sure it is not going to be with us for a long time. Some people are not sleeping; of course, they're afraid to go out sometimes ... We just have to work harder to make up for the losses [in revenues]."

Noli and Loren

For the first time since they parted ways during the 2004 vice presidential election, Vice President Noli de Castro and former Sen. Loren Legarda are one in calling on Ms Arroyo to lift PP 1017.

The election rivals, both popular broadcast journalists before they entered politics, said there was no need to prolong emergency rule because the situation had stabilized.

"Personally, I think it should be lifted this week because there is no more emergency, granted there was. Prolonging the emergency situation is no longer justified," De Castro said.

Legarda said PP 1017 was "a baseless and useless legal scarecrow."

'Final Talk 2' a tall tale, says lawyer

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Luige A. del Puerto and Tara V. Quismundo

WHERE DID "FINAL TALK 2"—CODE NAME of a planned alliance between communist guerrillas and rebel soldiers purportedly revealed in a seized computer flash disk—come from?

Police officers who arrested Magdalo mutiny leader Lt. Lawrence San Juan and his lawyer Jose Christopher Belmonte last Feb. 21 in Padre Garcia, Batangas, did not report any computer files or documents found in their possession.

It was six days later when authorities claimed that they had recovered from San Juan several documents and flash disks that contained an 18-page document detailing an agreement between the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the Makabayan Kawa Pilipino (MKP) to bring down the Arroyo government.

The plan, dubbed Final Talk 2, was used as basis to file nonbailable rebellion charges against San Juan, Belmonte and 14 others, including known CPP leaders, six party-list representatives and retired and active military personnel.

"There was no such thing as a flash disk," said Roel Pulido, lawyer for the Magdalo group that staged the failed 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

He said yesterday that the first thing he did when he reached the Batangas Police station where San Juan, Belmonte and another companion, Alberto Guyal, were held was to check on the items found in their vehicle.

The affidavit filed by two arresting officers said the items found were a Magdalo flag, a pair of fiberglass eyeglasses, a photocopy of

car registration, photocopy of registration form for PMI Colleges, two pieces of clothing, a pair of shorts and a pocketbook titled "Sensei."

The affidavit dated Feb. 21 was signed by Senior PO3 Segundo Binay and Senior PO1 Fidel Macatangay of the Intelligence Section of the Batangas Police Provincial Office.

It was sworn before Assistant Provincial Prosecutor Cynthia Ricablana who handled the cases filed against Belmonte and Guyal.

A big lie

"This is proof beyond doubt that the so-called Final Talk 2 is a big lie. This is an official document that cannot be denied," Pulido said.

He said San Juan and Belmonte had a cell phone each which were taken from them. The cell phones were not mentioned in the affidavit.

On Feb. 22, a day after San Juan's arrest, Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon announced that taken from San Juan were a Magdalo flag "and personal belongings including eight cell phones."

He did not mention any documents or flash disks of Final Talk 2. He spoke instead about the Magdalo group's supposed "Oplan Hackie" that included recruitment for another uprising.

It was on Feb. 26, or two days after Ms Arroyo declared emergency rule, when a military spokesperson first mentioned "documents taken from San Juan" that supposedly talked about an alliance between the communists and the rebel soldiers.

The next day, on Feb. 27 the military gave reporters a four-page briefing paper about "Final Talk 2" that gave a long list of items supposedly recovered from San Juan, namely "several high-value documents, a Magdalo flag, eight

cellular phones, personal belongings, two flash disks, a tape recorder and Maxell audio cassette cartridges and diskettes."

No computers

No computers, which are needed to read the flash disks, were mentioned in the new list of recovered items.

The flash disks, the military declared, contained an 18-page document titled, "Minutes re Final Talk" dated Feb. 20, a day before San Juan's arrest, that detailed an agreement between the CPP and the Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (KAB) to oust Ms Arroyo and grab power.

The military admitted the minutes contained only aliases, but that they have an inkling who the aliases refer to.

Belmonte and San Juan through his wife have denied being in talks with CPP-New People's Army cadres in Batangas, as authorities claimed.

Magdalo denial

The Magdalo group has also denied a tie-up with the communists in a statement issued by Air Force Capt. Segundino Orfano Jr. on Feb. 22.

Shortly after joining his husband in Tuesday's hearing against mutinous soldiers at the Makati Regional Trial Court, San Juan's wife Evelyn denied charges that San Juan had links with the CPP.

"That's one thing that he denies ... the association ... those charges," Evelyn San Juan told reporters the other day.

San Juan's father shared the sentiment, saying it was impossible for his son to resort to the unlikely team-up to pursue his cause.

"We do not believe that. He is not capable of doing that, because his principles are different," said San Juan's father, retired engineer Rodolfo San Juan.

Alert level still high in camps

Old charges dug up vs 6 party-list reps

By Armand N. Nocum, Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño

"DISINFORMATION" CIRCULATED through text messages have prompted the Armed Forces to maintain a high alert level among its military camps in Metro Manila, an official of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) said yesterday.

"There's a lot of disinformation that has been going around. Although unverified or untrue, the level of alert was maintained," Lt. Col. Restituto Padilla, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Padilla said that the military has been implementing the alert level called "Defcon 1," which is one stage higher than the red alert level, since last Friday's alleged coup attempt.

It was the same alert level followed during the standoff at the Philippine Marine Corps in Fort Bonifacio on Sunday, Padilla said.

"Defcon" stands for "Defense Condition."

According to Padilla, Defcon 3 means that the "country is under attack;" Defcon 2, the country is under "imminent attack;" and Defcon 1, there is "security information" about a possible attack.

On Tuesday night, text messages circulated that the PAF headquarters at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City was on double alert.

The text messages said that soldiers had been deployed around the base and that firearms had been brought there, as well as food.

But Padilla said all this was part of the beefed up security. Nikko Dizon

court against the six.

"Numerous relatives and kin of those slain are now coming out to testify," he said.

But the nature of the charges being hurled at the party-list lawmakers has left Ocampo confused.

"This is a witchhunt. Which case are they referring to?" asked a puzzled Ocampo.

Deadly purges

"We're supposed to have conspired with the Communist Party of the Philippines? But we're also supposedly involved in coup, a charge which is still being developed," said Ocampo.

Ocampo denied they had a role in the purge of communist ranks of suspected government spies.

"In fact, I have been absolved of that already," said Ocampo, referring to the trial from 1989 to 1992 conducted by two Quezon City regional trial courts.

The justice department should review their archives. They are filing a case against me that has already been dismissed by the RTCs. That questions the competence of the DOJ," said Ocampo.

The anti-infiltration campaigns that the CPP initiated in the 1980s were "Oplan Kadena de Amor" in Southern Tagalog (1982), "Kampanyang Ahos" in Mindanao (1985-86), "Operation Missing Link" in Southern Taga-

log (1988), and "Operation Olympia" (1988-89), a nationwide campaign.

At least 1,800 CPP-NPA cadres and civilians were believed killed during the purges.

Gonzalez said the six could also be liable for murder charges, but that such crime is now deemed included in the rebellion complaints.

On Monday, Philippine National Police filed rebellion and insurrection complaints against the six congressmen and 45 alleged communist leaders—including CPP founder Jose Maria Sison—who were accused of mounting a three-year plan to topple the Arroyo administration.

Military adventurers

Other accused include Luis Jandoni of the National Democratic Front, CPP/NPA central committee officials Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, Milito Gior Command spokesperson Gregorio Rosal, Bayan Secretary General Nathaniel Santiago, NDF commanding officer Tirso Alcantara; and NDF Bicol regional party head Sotero Llamas.

Sison, based in the Netherlands, has denied allegations that the rebels had entered into a tactical alliance with "military adventurers" to topple Ms Arroyo. With reports from Norman Bondon and AFP

'Oxbridge' Club to honor UK envoy, ADB president

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE CLUB HONORS British Ambassador and ADB President

The Oxford and Cambridge Club of the Philippines will hold a reception today in honor of the British Ambassador to the Philippines, Peter Beckingham and the Asian Development Bank president Haruhiko Kuroda. The affair will be hosted by Philip Romualdez, president of Oxford and Cambridge Club, at his residence.

The Oxford and Cambridge Club of the Philippines is an organization of graduates of Oxford University and Cambridge University in the United Kingdom who reside or work in the Philippines.

At present, it has about 50 members, a number of whom are professionals of the Asian Development Bank, including the ADB President.

Kuroda completed Master of Philosophy in Economics in Oxford. Before joining the ADB, Kuroda was Special Advisor to the Cabinet of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Ambassador Beckingham, on the other hand, is a graduate of Cambridge University where he took up Bachelor and Master of Arts.

Beckingham has been working with Great Britain's Foreign Service Office since the early 1980s and has been assigned to the United States, Europe and the Asia-Pacific.

Another noted British national who is a member of the club is Howard Belton, the chair and CEO of Unilever Philippines. He took up Bachelor of Arts in Economic, Politics and Philosophy in Cambridge.

Among the Filipinos who graduated from Oxford and Cambridge are: Fred Elizalde (Cambridge), Antonio Araneta (Oxford), Ambassador Jose Romero (Cambridge), Ambassador Jose Syjuco (Oxford), Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (Oxford), Philip Romualdez (Oxford), Jeffrey and Winifred Chung (Cambridge), Luis Virata (Cambridge), Elizabeth-Cu-jiung Virata (Cambridge), Philip Cu-umng (Cambridge), Antonio Perique (Oxford), and Anates Arnaldo-Oracion (Cambridge).

Romualdez, who graduated Master of Letters at Oxford University sees the OXBRIDGE Club to be at the center of major British-related activities in the Philippines. He said that it will foster business relations between the U.K. and the Philippines.

Romualdez believes that the Club will be able to effectively link graduates of Oxford and Cambridge with work / business opportunities in areas / fields where OXBRIDGE may work.

The Club will co-host visiting dignitaries who are graduates of Oxford and Cambridge (e.g., Prince Charles, former British Prime Minister M. Thatcher and former U. S. President Clinton). He added that the Club will also serve as link to graduates of OXBRIDGE/coming to the Philippines for pleasure or business.

Romualdez said that the Club will establish strong ties with the other Oxford and Cambridge Clubs around the world and participate in their activities like tourism, arts and business.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Thaksin seeks help of supporters

BANGKOK—EMBATTLED PRIME MINISTER THAKSIN Shinawatra said Wednesday he would not bow to growing demands to step down, appealing to supporters to help him end a deepening political crisis.

"I guarantee that I will not resign from my position," Thaksin told reporters after meeting with leaders of his ruling Thai Rak Thai party. "I will handle my responsibilities in this position as well as I can."

The comments came amid swirling rumors that either Thaksin would resign to end Thailand's worst political crisis in a decade or that the military would intervene

and stage a coup, which top military officials dismissed.

"Rumors of a military coup are not true," Supreme Commander Gen. Rueangrot Mahasaranon, head of the country's armed forces, told reporters. "The military will not interfere in the political conflict. The political problem should be resolved by politicians."

Thaksin met Tuesday with mili-

tary leaders over lunch at his office, prompting speculation that army chiefs at the meeting had suggested the prime minister resign.

"We had lunch, and I have not heard of the army chief saying that sort of thing," Rueangrot said.

Hoping to stave off a mass anti-government rally planned for Sunday, Thaksin called on supporters to flood his office with mail over the next few days to show they still wanted him in power.

"I am appealing to all Thai people who want peace and democracy to send postcards and letters," Thaksin told reporters earlier Wednesday.

adding that he would post all the messages outside his government compound "to make the opposition realize they should cooperate with the government to tackle the crisis."

Trying to head off mounting calls for his resignation, Thaksin dissolved Parliament on Friday and called for early national elections. But the election has become another crisis for Thaksin, with the opposition saying it will boycott the vote, scheduled for April 2.

Anti-Thaksin activists issued an ultimatum Tuesday demanding that Thaksin step down or face what they say will be the biggest anti-gov-

ernment rally yet on Sunday. Protesters, who have staged weekend rallies drawing tens of thousands of people, want Thaksin to resign for alleged corruption and abuse of power.

The prime minister has vowed to hold his own pro-government rally Friday.

Thailand has a long history of military coups. The last was in February 1991, when Gen. Sunthon Kongsomphong overthrew the government of Prime Minister Chatchai Choonhavan.

The military has since distanced itself from domestic politics, but the

political stalemate and growing street demonstrations have led to speculation that it once again might intervene.

Thaksin, one of the country's richest men, won a second term as prime minister a year ago with a landslide election victory by his party, which took 377 of the 500 seats in the House of Representatives.

In addition to allegations of corruption, he has also come under fire for mishandling a Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand, stifling the media and allegedly allowing cronies to reap gains from state policies.

AP

Bush visits Afghanistan en route to India, Pakistan

KABUL—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH made a surprise visit to Afghanistan on Wednesday, flying in secretly to support the country's fledgling government in the face of rising violence from al-Qaida and Taliban militants.

Bush made a detour from a trip to India and Pakistan for a five-hour visit in Afghanistan that was not announced officially until Air Force One landed at the sprawling Bagram military base north of Kabul, the capital.

The White House wanted to conceal Bush's presence to reduce the risk of any attempt on his life.

Bush, making his first visit to Afghanistan, was later greeted by President Hamid Karzai at his palace in Kabul. Bush was accompanied by his wife, Laura, and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"Welcome, the president, to Afghanistan,"

Karzai said as the two leaders paused for photographs on a red carpet.

Bush and Karzai were to have lunch and hold a joint press conference, said an Afghan official, who was familiar with Karzai's schedule but did not want to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Bush was also to preside over a ceremonial ribbon-cutting for the U.S. Embassy, and to give a pep talk to troops at Bagram Air Base.

When Bush signed off on the India-Pakistan visit eight weeks ago, he was presented with the option of also going to Afghanistan, and chose it, White House press secretary Scott McClellan said.

"This is an opportunity to show our support for a good friend and ally and emerging democracy," McClellan said. "We stand firmly with the people of Afghanistan as they are charting their own future."

Security was tight in the Afghan capital, with helicopters flying overhead and US military Humvee jeeps patrolling the streets.

The US military leads a 21,000-strong coalition of international forces hunting Taliban and al-Qaida militants, mostly in the country's south and east.

Karzai is a close ally of Washington and took power after the ouster of the hardline Taliban regime by US-led forces in late 2001 for hosting al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

AP

IMPORTANT

To the Devotees of the SACRED HEART OF JESUS. Tomorrow, March 3, 2006 is the FIRST FRIDAY of the month. Novenas to the SACRED HEART OF JESUS and to ST. ANTHONY are given free. Please get them from JASMINE at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.



MARDI GRAS

King of Mardi Gras Rex travels down St. Charles Avenue while celebrating Mardi Gras Day in New Orleans Feb. 28.

Bird flu spreads in Europe and Africa

PARIS—BIRD FLU IS LIKELY TO hit poultry flocks in a number of European states, experts said on Tuesday, while the spread of the virus to one of Africa's poorest countries, Niger, heightened fears that the infection could spread to people.

In pet-loving Europe, the report that a domestic cat in Germany had died of possible H5N1 avian influenza sparked alarm, but experts said it was unlikely the case increased the risks to humans.

Sweden became the latest in a series of new countries to report an outbreak of bird flu. Two wild ducks found dead on the Baltic coast had an aggressive form of bird flu and officials said it was likely to be confirmed as the feared H5N1 strain.

The French Agriculture Ministry said a 16th wild swan had tested positive for H5N1 in the Ain department of eastern France. Security measures have been put in place.

France has already confirmed an outbreak of the virus at a turkey farm in the same department.

Niger ordered a cull of all poultry in areas hit by bird flu and said it was stepping up checks across the rest of the semi-desert country to try to stop the disease from spreading. The poor former French colony became the second sub-Saharan African nation after neighboring Nigeria to confirm the presence of H5N1, which mostly affects birds but which has infected 173 people, killing 93 of them since 2003.

The government in Niger held an emergency cabinet meeting and said "preventative measures" were being taken.

"They include the systematic culling of poultry in affected zones, the destruction by incineration and burying of suspect cases, of dead birds and of objects that may have been in contact with these birds," the government said in a statement.

Niger is one of the poorest countries on earth, where one child in four dies before the age of five.

Experts fear weak detection systems in Africa—which has an estimated 1.1 billion chickens, mostly in backyard farms—combined with the easy movement of birds across borders and limited awareness about the disease could help its spread.

Reuters

68 killed in Baghdad bombings, mortar fire

BAGHDAD—SUNNIS AND Shiites traded bomb attacks and mortar fire against mainly religious targets in Baghdad well into the night Tuesday, killing at least 68 people a day after authorities lifted a curfew that had briefly calmed a series of sectarian reprisal attacks.

The surge of violence deepened the trauma of residents already shaken by fears the country was teetering on the brink of sectarian civil war, threatened talks among Iraqi politicians struggling to form a government and raised questions about US plans to begin drawing down troop strength this summer.

Iraq began to seriously tilt toward outright civil war after the Wednesday bombing of the important Shiite Askariya shrine in the mainly Sunnite city of Samarra.

President Bush decried the latest surge in sectarian

violence Tuesday and said that for Iraqis "the choice is chaos or unity."

In Congressional testimony, National Intelligence Director John Negroponte said a civil war in Iraq could lead to a broader conflict in the Middle East, pitting the region's Sunni and Shiite powers against one another.

At least six of Tuesday's attacks hit religious targets, concluding with a car bombing after sundown at the Shiite Abdul Hadi Alababi mosque in the Hurrayah neighborhood that killed 23 and wounded 55.

At about the same time, a mortar round hit the Shiite Imam Kadhim shrine in the Kazimiyah neighborhood on the opposite side of the Tigris River, killing one and wounding 10.

Those attacks appeared to have been in retaliation for assaults on Sunnite places of worship earlier in the day.

AP

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Reuters

Russia, Iran bid to break nuke impasse

MOSCOW—RUSSIAN AND Iranian negotiators make a fresh bid in Moscow on Wednesday to reach a compromise deal that might defuse Tehran's stand-off with the West over its nuclear programme.

Iranian officials, headed by top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani, were due to meet a Russian delegation for further discussion of Moscow's proposal to carry out uranium enrichment for the Islamic Republic on Russian soil.

Larijani's presence, matched by that of Russian Security Council chief Igor Ivanov, put the new round of talks on a higher footing and raised hopes Iran was taking the Russian proposal seriously, something the West at

times has doubted.

"We are optimistic we can agree with our Iranian partners ... we think we can come to an agreement that a joint venture on the soil of the Russian Federation will be able to meet Iran's needs fully," Russian President Vladimir Putin told a news conference during a visit to Hungary.

Moscow sees the enrichment joint venture as a way out of confrontation, but diplomats in Europe and the United States doubt the proposal will satisfy Iran, which they suspect of covertly seeking nuclear weapons.

Although Tehran says it has a "basic" agreement with Russia about the scheme, it has refused so far to give up what it sees as its right to en-

rich uranium at home.

"We would like to enjoy our rights like Japan to have nuclear technology, of course for peaceful purposes," Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said in Japan on Tuesday.

Iran has said the world must recognise it should eventually be allowed to carry out enrichment domestically and in the meantime it must be able to conduct nuclear fuel research.

"It sounds as if they are combining technical expert discussions with highly-placed diplomatic efforts. They are making their best efforts on both sides and I take that as a good sign," said Rose Gottemoeller, director of the Moscow Carnegie Centre and a non-proliferation expert.

Reuters

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Trial of Saddam, 7 aides resumes

BAGHDAD—THE TRIAL OF SADDAM HUSSEIN and seven aides on charges of crimes against humanity resumed Wednesday with all the defense lawyers attending the session except Saddam's lead lawyer Khalil al-Dulaimi.

All the eight defendants came to the court and sat down quietly, an AFP correspondent reported.

Wednesday's hearing came amid fears of fresh outbreak of communal bloodshed in Iraq after a roadside bomb killed three in Baghdad, a day after a spate of bombings left 64 dead.

Iraqi prosecutors on Tuesday submitted to the court trying Saddam what they said was an execution order signed by the former Iraqi dictator, as his lawyers stormed out of the tribunal.

Documents were presented linking Saddam to the trial and execution of 148 villagers from Dujail, north of Baghdad, in some of the most significant documentary evidence to have been presented by the prosecution so far.

Saddam's lead lawyer, Khalil al-Dulaimi and Khamis Ubaydi, had walked out of the courtroom at the start of the hearing after the judge rejected their pleas for proceedings to be postponed and for the judge and chief prosecutor to be dismissed for alleged bias against the accused.

Ubaydi however was seen in the court Wednesday.

On Tuesday after their walkout they were immediately replaced by court-appointed lawyers who represented Saddam during an earlier defense counsel walkout.

Tuesday's hearing, which was quieter than previous sessions that threatened to descend into chaos owing to noisy interventions by the defendants, lasted two hours before being adjourned.

One of the documents, dated June 16, 1984 and allegedly signed by Saddam Hussein, confirmed the death sentences passed by a tribunal two days earlier. The disappearance of the men from Dujail followed a 1982 assassination attempt on Saddam in the village.

Prosecutors also submitted documentary evidence to show Saddam's office had ordered that the sentences be carried out, along with a letter, dated March 23, 1985, confirming the executions had taken place and a doctor was on duty to confirm the deaths.

The prosecutors said the villagers had been sentenced after a show trial in which they did not even appear.

Saddam and seven former cohorts, face death by hanging if they are convicted by the court.

The resumption of the trial came against a background of deadly civil unrest in Iraq, which included the bombing of the tomb of Saddam's father in his hometown of Tikrit.

The trial, which opened in October, resumed after a stormy hearing on Feb. 14, when a defiant Saddam announced he was on hunger strike amid chaotic scenes.

Dulaimi told AFP on Monday that the deposed president had ended his fast to protest court proceedings.

The trial has frequently run into trouble, with stormy sessions featuring long outbursts or walkouts by the defendants and their counsel as well as the resignation of the previous chief judge and the killing of two defense lawyers.

WORLD BRIEFS

30 al-Qaida militants killed

MIRANSHAH, Pakistan—Pakistan army troops backed by attack helicopters Wednesday destroyed a suspected al-Qaida camp near the Afghan border, killing or wounding up to 30 mainly foreign militants, officials said. At least 10 soldiers were injured and evacuated to a military hospital after a firefight with militants near the village of Saidgai in the remote North Waziristan tribal region. The troops surrounded the compound of eight houses after it had been severely pounded by helicopters which, according to local officials, killed or wounded up to 30 suspected al-Qaida fighters. "Between 25 to 30 foreign militants were killed or wounded in the raid," the region's top administration official Zaheerul Islam told AFP. A senior security official said the raid was conducted on specific information that al-Qaida was using the compound as a base to launch attacks across the border.

Bush defends ports deal

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush on Tuesday reaffirmed his support for letting a Dubai company control operations at key US ports despite a storm of political opposition. Despite polls showing widespread public displeasure with the arrangement, and plans for a new review, Bush and US national intelligence director John Negroponte said that the deal carried no security risk. The head of Dubai Ports World, the company at the center of the controversy, said meanwhile that the takeover was too far advanced to stop and also complained about the company's treatment by US lawmakers. Bush has threatened to veto any legislation blocking the deal and he said: "My position hasn't changed." "If there was any doubt in my mind, or people in my administration's mind that our ports would be less secure and the American people endangered, this deal wouldn't go forward," said the president.

AFP

Protest vs Bush visit

NEW DELHI—Tens of thousands of Indians waving black and white flags and chanting "Death to Bush" rallied Wednesday in New Delhi to protest a visit by US President George W. Bush. Crowd estimates varied, but one police officer said as many as 100,000 people, most of them Muslim, had gathered in a fairground in central New Delhi ordinarily used for political rallies, ahead of Bush's arrival late Wednesday. Among the speakers was Raj Babbar, a Hindu politician and actor, who said: "Whether Hindu or Muslim, the people of India have gathered here to show our anger. We have only one message—killer Bush go home." While Bush remains more popular in India than he is in many other countries, many here object to US policies, especially the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

AP

The trial is currently in the second phase of depositions by witnesses testifying over events during the Dujail massacre.

AFP

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Readers' Advocate LORNA KALAW TIROL
 readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph • Tel. No. 897-8806, Loc. 342

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Real emergency

ARE FILIPINOS SUPPOSED TO WAIT WITH BATED breath while President Macapagal-Arroyo ponders over the next 72 hours whether it's time to lift the reign of fear and repression she has unleashed upon the nation? And, if and when she deems to do so, are the people supposed to be grateful to her for allowing them to breathe the air of freedom she sucked out by signing Presidential Proclamation No. 1017?

EDITORIAL Five days after declaring a state of national emergency and calling out the armed forces to suppress a "rebellion," Ms Arroyo went on nationwide television yesterday to make the momentous announcement that she was changing nothing. But she dangled the possibility that she might recall PP 1017. Within 72 hours, she said, she expected the justice secretary to give her his assessment of the "destabilization movements" of her political foes. The secretary of national defense will also update her on "conditions in the military," while the chief of the Philippine National Police will do the same with regard to the peace and order situation. "I will lift the state of emergency once I am convinced [and] the security officials can assure me that we are in control of the situation," she promised.

But was there ever a time since Friday when any one in the administration, in the police or in the military, declared that the situation was out of control? Even at the height of the potentially explosive tantrum thrown by misinformed Marines, nobody in government came forward to make that assertion. If anything or anyone was out of control, it was the administration and the enforcers of PP 1017. They were the ones who broke up with truncheons a peaceful demonstration on EDSA. They were the ones who arrested Randy David and several others who were peacefully marching on EDSA. They were the ones who dug up a case that was older than EDSA I to justify the detention of Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran and sought to arrest without warrant a handful of other leftist members of the House of Representatives. They were the ones who raided The Daily Tribune and sent troopers to keep watch over some media organizations and intimidate newsmen. They are the ones who continue to threaten television and radio stations and newspapers with closure in case they violate government standards that do not even exist. And they seem to be enjoying their first exercise of extraordinary powers that are of doubtful legality.

The principal enforcers of PP 1017 are unlikely to surrender easily the much wider leeway they have been given to get back at their imagined tormentors in media and their enemies in the Left. So if the President would rely solely on the judgment of her "security officials," it might be premature to expect the withdrawal of the state of emergency by the weekend. In fact, they have already rejected earlier suggestions by her economic team to lift the state of emergency as soon as possible to calm the financial markets. Instead, they offered a security briefing to the economic managers who promptly yielded to the hard-liners' view, leaving little doubt as to who were calling the shots.

The security cluster members' continuing resistance to return to normality is evident from their reaction to the President's latest announcement. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has said there are still some "loose ends" that need to be tied before the state of emergency is lifted. PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao has described the situation as "volatile." If they were to have their way, it is almost certain that the state of emergency will be around for some time yet.

But pressure is building up for the recall of the proclamation. Instead of decimating its ranks, PP 1017 is broadening and strengthening the opposition. Major religious congregations are coming together to oppose the proclamation. The campuses are beginning to stir up in ferment. Business groups, while initially welcoming the President's use of the iron hand, are starting to call for the lifting of PP 1017. And the government of the United States appears to have signaled its reservations about a prolongation of the state of emergency.

How much longer will the President resist these pressures? All her instincts must be telling her now to terminate an ill-conceived and dangerous experiment. Unless she has fallen hostage to her fears and her "security officials," it would be pointless to hang on to a proclamation that promises to bring her presidency to a real state of emergency.



Press tutorial

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado



"We learn from history that we learn nothing from history." —George Bernard Shaw

IN THE CALIBRATED ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE the press, does the President's General Order No. 5 sarcastically repeat the tragedy that was the dictator Marcos' "Letter of instruction No. 1"?

Proclamation 1017 declaring a state of emergency only means the President can call on the armed forces to assist the police to curb lawless violence or rebellion, constitutional scholar Joaquin Bernas, SJ, points out. Nothing more. "It does not authorize her to cross constitutional demarcation lines."

But "to all appearances, her minions read it as a declaration of war," Father Bernas notes. "The danger of abuse is significantly enhanced. Now, the iron fist is... showing behind the mask."

There have been initial brawls with media. National Telecommunications officials demanded that TV and radio "refrain from airing statements that incite." Police raided the opposition's Daily Tribune. Troops surrounded two TV stations.

Presidential chief of staff Michael Defensor endlessly invokes GO 5 to justify this assault. The police will monitor the press, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao says. And if we in the media are "guilty" in their view, why, they'd just "take over." How's that for a refresher course in Marcosian diktats?

Let's get a few facts straight. A state of emergency declaration does not suspend the Bill of Rights. Prohibitions against abridging freedom of the press, therefore, remain in force. Thus, government cannot impose prior restraints, send in censors, much less padlock media.

"There are absolutes in our Bill of Rights," Justice Hugo Black said. "They were put there on purpose by men who knew what words meant and meant that their prohibitions were absolute."

That constitutional bedrock is why Sen. Joko Arroyo urged the press to stand firm. Any law or order that fractures constitutionally protected rights "is unenforceable," he stressed.

Few remember it now. But Marcos' first stab at the press came with his May 1970 order to

But Defensor, Lomibao et al. haven't learned from the Constitution. Perhaps, history can offer a tutorial?

Lesson One: Suppressing media is self-defeating.

GO 5 isn't even a stripped-down version of the dictator's "Letter of Implementation No. 12." On Sept. 25, 1972, Minister Francisco Tatad signed "Public Information Order No. 1" setting the guidelines.

Among other things, it banned any editorial, opinion, commentary and materials "that tend to incite or otherwise inflame people... undermine people's faith in government... and thereby thwart efforts to achieve a New Society."

The result was a press whose "credibility was so low, it became a mere publicity machine and an embarrassing liability of the government," Sidney Schanberg wrote in The New York Times. "President Marcos himself admitted the press had become too sycophantic and obsequious."

GO 5 recycles what the President sees as threats. There's none of LOI 12's "compulsory unification of the graveyard" provisions. So, how do those clamping on prior restraints or threatening closure justify their "war"?

Lesson Two: "In the long run of history, the censors and inquisitors always lost," Cebu's major newspapers said. "The only weapon against bad ideas is a better one."

In his memoirs "A Guardian of Memory," the late Armando J. Malay recalls how Japanese censors sat at newsdesks to sift through copy. Few believed the propaganda they published. And underground newspapers, like Free Philippines, thrived.

Few remember it now. But Marcos' first stab at the press came with his May 1970 order to

depot Chinese Commercial News editor Rizal Yuyitung and his publisher brother Quintin. A Filipino, Quintin was arrested at the old Manila Overseas Press Club.

Both were shoved into an Air Force C-47, flown to Taipei, summarily tried, sentenced and jailed. An international outcry secured their release. Canada gave refuge to Rizal, and Quintin lived in the United States until his death. Both saw the Marcos regime collapse.

Lesson Three: Press muzzlers first seek out the weakest link.

Joseph Estrada slapped a P101-million libel suit and a P2-billion BIR tax assessment on the Manila Times after it published a story on his serving as an "unwitting aling" to an allegedly graft-laced P450-million power contract. The then Gokongwei-owned paper published a front-page apology. Most of the staff quit.

Encouraged, Erap next tried to smash the Inquirer. His tool: pressuring advertisers to pull out. This attack is documented in "The Inquirer At 20." Managing editor Jose Ma. Nolasco titled his article: "Estrada pushed his luck—and lost it all."

It's recommended reading for administration "warriors." They may learn from history—and from the fact that Erap now is in the slammer.

The Daily Tribune, meanwhile, has been raided. OK, so, the Tribune is not a journalism icon. But people are discerning. The Tribune's minuscule circulation shows readers perceive it as an opposition megaphone.

But the Charter's provision against the clipping of press freedom covers all papers: good, lousy or indifferent. In a democratic society, the only permissible form of censorship is the citizen's refusal to read or listen.

"Government may not force a newspaper to print copy which, in its journalistic discretion, it chooses to leave on the newsroom's floor," Supreme Court justice Byron White wrote in 1974. That still holds in 2006.

The journalists that Marcos and Erap tried to gag were there to report their downfall. That's Lesson Four. Class dismissed.

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Whatever happened to 'never again'?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



"NEVER AGAIN!" WAS THE CRY THAT AROSE after February 1986, a cry that might have issued from the hollow mouths of the Holocaust victims themselves. Martial law was our own equivalent of the Holocaust, notwithstanding that it did not carry with it stark images of smoke coming out of the chimneys of buildings where men, women and children had been. We have our own horrifying images of mass graves and maimed bodies alongside the grinning faces of those partying in the presidential yacht. Indeed, we have our own stark images of non-images of the faces of the disappeared, the obdurate presence of the absent, the people their loved ones would never see again.

The cry "Never again!" was so resonant it spawned entire groups dedicated to a dictator-watch, making sure one would never rise again. "Never again!" was even a forum in the Internet, meant to be an early warning device alerting all and sundry about the signs of a brewing tyranny.

Well, 20 years later, dictatorship is back, resurrected on the very day dedicated to commemorating its death. Twenty years later, martial law is back, raised up on the very day dedicated to its being toppled down. Whatever happened to "never again"?

As it turns out, many of those who shouted that line ferociously are now serving tamely the one person who is resolved to recycle dictatorship "ever and ever again." As it turns out, what they really meant when they said, "Never again!" was that never again would they be poor, never again would they be without power, never again would they suffer the discomfits of struggling against injustice and oppression.

History repeats itself, as they say, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. How very true, except that this one is a bitter farce, it only hurts when you laugh. GMA is truly a caricature of Marcos, but a most perverse one. At least Marcos won twice in presidential elections before he became a dictator and ruled the country with an iron fist. GMA has not won a single presidential election — she was short-

into power by the very thing she has now declared illegal, which is People Power, for the heroic act of hiding under the bed, or Cory's and Cardinal Sin's skirts; and she merely stole the presidency from Fernando Poe Jr. — and she has the gall to plunge this country into the darkness of martial law?

What a pathetic people we are if we will just bow our heads and accept it. Or utter that monstrous phrase with abject weariness: "Let's move on."

Whatever has turned "Never again" into "Ever and ever again"?

I can think of all sorts of sophisticated or convoluted explanations for it, but a friend of mine has hit the nail on the head with a simple one. "What the hell has happened to us?" — she exasperated to me the other day. "Have we become a people without balls?"

That is the most direct, forceful and complete explanation for why, 20 years after we liberated ourselves from a dictatorship, we have fallen back into its clutches. No, more than that, it's the most scientific one. We've lost our balls. Or more accurately, we've allowed a small person (spiritual, not literal) who never won a presidential election to cut off our balls.

That is so in the sense of "balls" meaning pride and courage. We've lost our pride, and we've lost our courage.

The first has been unraveling over the last few years when we kept on beating our chests and ruing in doleful voices that beggars cannot be choosers, let's just choose the lesser evil, the iniquity is done, let's just move on. It's that plunging into the lowest pit of mediocrity that settling for crumbs out of self-inflicted sense of

desperation, that willingness to tolerate abuse and wrongdoing that has undone us. Beggars cannot be choosers? Choosers cannot be beggars! It's the mental prison of thinking you have no choice that makes you a beggar, not the other way around.

In any case, what idiocy should possess any one to make him suppose GMA is the "lesser evil" to anything? Of course, that was how she advertised herself in the elections (the lesser evil to FPJ) and that is how she advertises her self today (the lesser evil to any alternative) The lesser evil? Hell, a dog would be a lesser evil. At least a dog has virtues that commend it as man's best friend. You keep thinking you have no choice but to pick the lesser evil — Raul Roco was hands down a patent good in the last elections, even if his EQ was constantly at war with his IQ — and you'll keep getting the greater hell. Look where we are now.

The second, which is that we've lost the fire in our bellies, is patent today. A phalanx of anti-riot cops attacks a crowd of marchers who are doing anything but rioting and the marchers run away. A checkpoint full of soldiers stops people from marching to Fort Bonifacio to come in aid of a beleaguered group of Marines, as Col. Ariei Querubin put it, and they agree to stand rooted to the spot. What has happened to this country's capacity to raise a fist at tyranny? What has happened to this country's capacity to defy dictatorship?

I joked before media friends last Sunday that better the crowd at Ultra, at least they had the balls to rush forward. The crowds that gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of EDSA and to defend a group of Marines at Bonifacio a couple of days later had the balls only to either run away or be rendered immobile. Maybe, I said, next time we hold a rally we should announce that prizes in the form of house and lot, tricycles and cash, will be given to those who stand their ground. Looking back, I don't know if that is a joke at all.

Forget about economic recovery. Let's just recover our balls.

THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2006

OPINION

A1

Lagman recalls Marcos' excesses

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



AT THE HEIGHT OF LAST SUNDAY'S TURMOIL at Port Bonifacio, rumors flew that Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos was text messaging furiously in an attempt to rally People Power in support of Col. Ariel Querubin. This story couldn't be confirmed, but Marcos has denounced President Macapagal-Arroyo for trying to make a poor copy of the martial law regime of her father, the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. She also sought to equate Proclamation 1017 with Marcos' Proclamation 1081.

In a scathing privilege speech last Feb. 28, however, Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman denounced the "public outcry" of Marcos—who was a "direct beneficiary of martial law"—against PP 1017 as a "pathetic showcase of inordinate gall." PP 1017, he said, is "Lilliputian compared to the ogre of 1081."

Lagman said it was during Marcos' dictatorship that the Philippine economy became the "sick man of Asia," a "pitiful pusycat in the region of economic tigers." By the time Marcos was ousted, Lagman said, 59.3 percent of Filipino families had fallen below the poverty line, and in his region of Bicol, it was 73.2 percent. He also pointed out that when Marcos became president in 1965, our foreign debt was only \$599 million, about when he fled 20 years later; it had swelled to \$28 billion. Thus, said Lagman, 20 years after the Marcoses fled, Filipino taxpayers are still paying Marcos' odious debts and they would continue to pay them until 2025. Of the country's total borrowings during Marcos' term, Lagman added, an estimated 33 percent was pocketed by him and his cronies.

But the Albay lawmaker also had reminders for former President Cory Aquino. He said there is "an apt precedent" to PP 1017 in Proclamation 503, "Declaring a State of National Emergency Throughout the Philippines," issued by Ms. Aquino on Dec. 6, 1989 following several coup attempts against her. Aquino amplified PP 503 by issuing EO 384 on Dec. 12, 1989, which provided general guidelines. "What was legal then, could not be illegal now," Lagman asserted. "What was constitutional in 1989 cannot be unconstitutional

in 2006 under the same 1987 Constitution."

Lagman also said the assessment of facts by GMA on the existence of a state of national emergency cannot be subject to judicial review, except if the factual determination involves a declaration of martial law or the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. But then, he said, PP 1017 does not, "either in language or spirit," declare martial law or suspend the writ, thus removing it from "the ambit of a justiciable issue."

Lagman also noted that many sectors have condemned PP 1017 "as wanting in legal and constitutional anchorage" and that "it would be convenient to join the chorus of popular dissent." But he said he won't do that as he views PP 1017 as "legal and constitutional, without in any way condoning any subsequent errant and unlawful acts invoking it as authority and shield."

His clear thinking is doubtless shared by other legal luminaries, even though they're not as noisy as those who are opposing it. This may be one reason why the Supreme Court has refused to issue a TRO against PP 1017 and, instead, ordered the Palace to submit its counter-arguments.

But all these may be overtaken by events. There's a prevailing sentiment among Cabinet members to recommend PP 1017's lifting by this weekend, doubtless due partly to the influence of the country's governors, such as Cotabato's Gov. Manny Piñol. He argues that the political turmoil is confined only to Metro Manila and that the rest of the country is peaceful, and the citizens want to go on with their lives. Thus, said Piñol, an emergency

proclamation should only cover Metro Manila where the troublemakers are and should be lifted everywhere else.

Edsa I's 20th anniversary drew reminiscences from everywhere. One of the most interesting was offered by my friend Pete Chan, executive director of the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Then assigned to the Los Angeles Consulate General, Pete recalled Serge Osmeña III, who was then on exile in the US, waking him up by phone on Feb. 22 to tell him the rebellion against Marcos had begun and that Consul General Raul Rabe in Honolulu and his staff had joined the clamor for him to step down. Chan, as acting LA consul general, had sealed the casket of former Sen. Sergen Osmeña Jr. two years earlier, and this brought him in contact with anti-Marcos stalwarts in the US. He narrated that in early 1986, a higher-ranking DFA official had just returned from Manila to take over the LA post, after having campaigned for Marcos in the February snap election. With the uprising against Marcos in Manila, this new official, however, quickly turned around and joined the consulate staff in withdrawing support from Marcos. Their defection attracted big media groups in LA. Interestingly, however, the acting consul general, to the dismay of the anti-Marcos elements, predicted on US TV and radio that a military junta headed by Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile would take over from Marcos. When this official got tired of his vigil in LA, Chan seized the opportunity to tell the US media and the world that the consulate's personnel were fervently hoping that Marcos would voluntarily step down and that he would not be replaced by a military junta.

So, what lessons did we draw from Edsa I? Pete says it showed that as a people, "we can do the impossible, the miraculous—but only if we move as one, without any personal greed or agenda of self-aggrandizement blocking our view to national development." Whenever he's asked why we are so poor, his answer is that to lick the big "P" of Poverty, "we should have less and less of that other big 'P' which is Politics."

When media women fought back

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Dayo



THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT THAT IS TINKERING with media freedom should learn a few lessons from the 1983 case (in the Supreme Court) of women journalists versus military officers.

The military's dreaded and intimidating moves at that time against seven women journalists, including myself, may have created a temporary chilling effect, but it did not prevent us from making bold moves to make sure it was not going to be done ever again to us or to anyone.

On Feb. 1, 1983, braving martial rule, 23 of us women writers and six male colleagues filed a "petition for prohibition with preliminary injunction" with the Supreme Court. This was to stop the military's National Intelligence Board (NIB) Special Committee No. 2 from harassing media practitioners and violating our right to freedom of expression and right to remain silent.

Named respondents were retired Brig. Gen. Wilfredo Estrada, Colonels Renato Ecaras, Balbino Diego, Galileo Kintanar, Hermogenes Peralta, Vicente Tigas, Maj. Eleanor Bernardino and NBI Assistant Director Ponciano Fernando—all of NIB No. 2.

A sudden creation of the dreaded AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Fabian Ver, the NIB was composed of high-ranking military officials tasked to "invite" and interrogate the women journalists whom they thought had written unflattering and damaging articles against the Marcos dictatorship.

Those invited for questioning were Arlene Babst, Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon, Nifez Cacho-Olivares, Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, Domini Torrevillas-Suarez, Eggie Apostol and myself. Jo-Ann, Domini, Lorna and I were then writing for the Panorama Magazine, while Nifez and Arlene were columnists of the Bulletin Today. Tita Eggie was publisher of Mr. & Ms. Magazine.

The military invitation asked us to appear before the NIB in order to "shed light on confidential matters being looked into by this committee." The last paragraph threatened: "Your failure to appear on a specified date and place shall be considered as waiver on your part, and this committee will be constrained to proceed in accordance with law."

We were interrogated one at a time by a group composed mostly of military officers. The closed-door interrogations were done at a Port Bonifacio hall and lasted for hours at a time. We were questioned about our motives for writing, writing fees, even our religious faith and upbringing. The military tried to cast aspersions on our motives and to link us to subversive elements.

I was questioned on my magazine feature article on military abuses in Bataan; Maglipon was questioned on her article on military abuses in Mindanao. This was the second interrogation for me, having been previously made to appear, interrogated and chastised (in a packed open hall) by Deputy Defense Secretary Carmelo Barbero on another magazine article about a Kalinga chief killed by soldiers.

(The "subversive" articles, excerpts of the proceedings and other pertinent details are in "Philippine Press Under Siege" Vols. 1 and 2.)

Refusing to be intimidated, we banded together and called on our media colleagues. Twenty-eight journalists—23 women and five men—led by 13 lawyers led by former Sen. Lorenzo Tañada, Joker Arroyo and law professor Perfecto Fernandez, went to the Supreme Court to put a stop to the intimidating interrogations.

Here are excerpts from our arguments. (Pardon the legalese.) "(The military) interrogations imposed prior restraint... in violation of constitutional guarantees on freedom of expression, in the course of said interrogations, (the military) respondents communicated emphatically to the petitioners questioned by them, the publications that are objectionable, with specification of the

subjects, manner of presentation, and tenor of language, that respondents disapprove of, thereby imposing guidelines and norms to be adhered to by (media) petitioners, apart from and in addition to the norms prescribed by law."

We further argued that the interrogations created a climate of fear and a chilling effect on the practice of journalism. We added that this could result in "curtailment of the free flow of information and opinion, indispensable to the fundamental right of the people to know all matters of public concern" guaranteed in the Constitution.

"Political liberty is thus jeopardized, for... the foundation of intelligent political decisions by the people, in the exercise of their right to self-government, is free access to knowledge or information relevant to the matters for decision."

The interrogations also "constituted unlawful incursions or intrusions into spheres of individual liberty and free choice, in violation of constitutional guarantees in the Bill of Rights."

Arguing for the government, Solicitor General Estreto Mendoza tried to play things down by declaring that the petition was "moot and academic" as Estrada had ordered that the NIB No. 2 be terminated as he "was satisfied with the results."

Mendoza pooh-poohed our complaint by saying "all that has taken place is plain conversation, interchange of ideas, opinions, perhaps biases and preferences. But there is no charge against, nor any complaint of whatever nature involving the petitioners." "Oh yeah?"

A few months later, editor Torrevillas-Suarez and I were facing a P10-million libel suit filed by Brig. Gen. Artemio Tadiar who claimed he was maligned (although he was not even mentioned) in my Bataan article. We had a battery of lawyers, among them, Joker Arroyo, Saklolo Leano and Rene Sagusag. The case was dropped in 1985.

The Marcos military was not about to back off. But the media women were bold, if not as bold as ever, helping set the stage for the dictatorship's eventual downfall.

Send feedback to ceresp@info.com.ph

She is as they are

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



THERE ARE TWO THINGS I HAVE BEEN SAYING in private since the present political crisis broke out. The first: We must assume that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has no choice—and no other desire—but to be president for life. The second: Her presidency is being propped up by the most invincible of forces: a stubborn refusal by many Filipinos to reject her, because to do so would entail rejecting themselves.

For both reasons, it is dangerous to hold on to the romantic notion that Ms. Arroyo and her supporters are susceptible to appeals to "the better angels of their nature." We face their fiendish refusal; the demon of selfish class interest has possessed them.

On the first point, does anyone really believe that even if the President makes it to June 30, 2010, she can quietly go into retirement? The most she would have accomplished by then is postpone a debacle. Bereft of presidential immunity, deprived of access to the national treasury, lacking the power to hire, promote and fire, stripped of the ability to issue orders as commander in chief, who will defend her? Who will protect her? Certainly not Congress—or parliament—which, every day, needs all sorts of inducements just to muster a quorum. Definitely not the governors or mayors who support her now because she's dangling an extra term, election-free. Surely not the people who, her own defenders claim, are virtuously above "all the political noise." So who among the citizenry will budge even if she squeals bloody murder? No, she has to keep going, and going, and going.

On the second point, Filipinos find it difficult to reject Ms. Arroyo because she embodies everything conservative Filipinos want to be, admire and respect. She enjoys social prominence; she is extremely well-educated, even polished; she can be elegant or, at least, handle herself without the obvious insecurity of a parvenu; she has been, in so many respects, to the Manor born. She speaks the right languages, went to the right schools, belongs to the right church, married into the right family, and

is aloof—even contemptuous of the coarse manners and enthusiasms of the vulgar herd. There are those who are furious at Cory Aquino, and who say she's only interested in getting even because of Hacienda Luisita. What about the Arroyo haciendas? Let's list them down: Hacienda Bacan, Hacienda Manolita, Hacienda Grande was chopped up—most of the slices going to family members; hundreds of hectares were handed out by the President and her husband, but some farmers' groups are complaining that all they got was hot air.) Has anyone heard whether the Arroyos even attempted a stock sharing plan, or are the Arroyo tenants still living blissfully in the 19th century, reading under the shade of the generous paunch of the President's husband? All we've heard, particularly in the case of Hacienda Bacan, is the Arroyos' claim that their loving tenants were the property removed from land reform coverage. So forget about even a token land reform.

If Cory Aquino has not done enough, it's because she's not even the largest—much less the sole—owner of Hacienda Luisita. And I know for a fact that as far as she's concerned, if the government wants it, it can take it; except that her other relatives cling to it.

But set that aside for a moment and ponder this: The apologists of the President rage against communists and how evil they are; then in the same breath repeat communist propaganda about Hacienda Luisita. Can it be anything else but a smoke screen? Talk about smoke-belching.

Then again, if you cannot attack frontally, attack from the rear and at the heels. Unleash little lapdogs—like lawyer Romela Bengzon—to yap

and yap at Cory's heels. (That, too, should serve as a reward for Bengzon who was one of the main sponsors of the Consultative Commission's notorious proposal to keep Ms. Arroyo in power, and to expand her powers, too. The other sponsor was lawyer Raul Lambino, who replied with an emphatic "Yes" to former Sen. Vicente Paterno's pointed question as to whether their proposed amendments effectively gave Ms. Arroyo the same power Marcos accorded himself in 1972. As a result, Paterno has disowned participation in the ConCom and Cha-cha.)

And if the canine behavior of the Palace poohs weren't bad enough, there are those whom a commentator calls the "Pekingese press" (a phrase apparently coined by an American journalist, Jimmy Breslin). Members of the Pekingese press, commentator Manuel Buencamino points out, find nothing wrong with asking the question: "As the world rushes aid to the victims of the Leyte landslide, why are the political players of Manila more engrossed with power grab?" Buencamino points out such comments are "a shameless act of enlisting the dead as soldiers to protect his self-elected patroness, Gloria Arroyo." George Bush tried to do with the 9/11 dead what government apologists are doing with the Leyte victims, except that in America, the victims' families denounced Bush. It took someone of our threatened media to point out that an apologist like Alex Magno is "nothing but a maggot feasting on Leyte's cadavers." Like all others who use the Leyte tragedy to defend the President.

Says PNP Chief Arturo Lomibao: "I am trained to command with arms, rather than with words." That is the argument of the brute; the defining statement of this administration's governance. That so many are prepared to accept it says as much about them as it does about the administration proud to bear its people utter such lines. It is a society that will stubbornly defend Ms. Arroyo because its members and she believe in the golden rule: Whoever has the gold makes the rules. A mentality best described by the Spanish word, "Somos."

Zombies and idiots?

I GREW UP IN THE COMPANY OF DOCTORS. MY PARENTS are doctors. My parents' friends are doctors. As I grew up, they were the people I saw every day. They were my family, my rites and rituals, my playmates.

Since my parents had me when they were just starting out, a you wasn't in their budget. So everywhere they went, I went too: to the clinic or the hospital, on rounds or inside operating rooms, over hill and over dale. I don't think a 1st year resident can have more exposure than what I had at the age of 5.

YOUNG BLOOD

Lorraine Grace P. Rojas

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

Given this background, you could say it was a foregone conclusion where I would end up. I don't think there was really a moment when I had to tell my parents that I wanted to be a doctor. It was just a given. It's not that they didn't make sure that this is what I really wanted. I can remember them asking (as I was submitting my application for my pre-med course), with great seriousness, "Are you sure?" But that was about the extent of our discussion on the subject.

My parents definitely know how hard medical school can be. They know that they make it hard on purpose. They know that they beat you down, play with your emotions and drill you incessantly until you are a babbling shadow of your former self. So is it any wonder that they brag to anyone that their daughter is a doctor? No, excuse me, about to become a doctor?

See, that's what I am. I'm on the verge of becoming one basically. I am in medicine's no-man's land called "clerkship." Technically speaking, I'm in my 4th and (hopefully) final year of schooling. But as my father eloquently put it, "In the pecking order, the clerk is at the bottom. You are the lowest form of animal."

Yeah. See those insignificant things at the end of the line? That's us. We are the clerks. We are overworked and never paid. Heck, we're the ones who pay the hospital and the school a ridiculous amount of money to do this to us.

I wonder what all those people would think when they realize what exactly this (almost) doctor does every day—or what all their doctors once did every day when they were clerks. We run around, doing everything for everyone else. We barely sleep and when we do, it's (1) on a bench, the floor, a chair or a mosquito-infested bunk bed; and (2) punctuated by periods when we are rudely awakened to monitor a patient, assist on an appendectomy, perform CPR or run some more. We walk around like zombies in the middle of the night, monitoring the blood pressure or temperature of patients. We push wheelchairs or stretchers for people three times our size. We suffer indignities as our patients mistake us for everyone else (nurse, nurse's aide, med tech, receptionist, random people dressed in white) except doctors. We are called ate, kuya, hija, hijo, neng, toy and, horror of horrors, hoy. We measure the urine, we suction the secretions and, at the drop of a hat, we are expected to know everything.

I had one patient in the out-patient department, a college student. He watched as the consultant berated me over the physical exam I had given, my diagnosis and my proposed plan of treatment. As I turned to him with my last remaining shreds of self-respect, he whispered in awe, "Paru pa ka kayo ng dedefending thesis araw-araw."

He got it. Every patient is a learning experience and every conversation is an exam.

There are those who say we have it pretty good now. It's worse when you're an intern, a resident, a consultant—more responsibility, more work—but as a clerk, you have camaraderie, blah, blah, blah. I know they have a hard time, maybe harder than we do, but when you're at the bottom of the heap, anywhere else sounds pretty good. It's hard to have perspective when you have to crane your head just to see where you're heading. I mean, when your boss has a boss who has a boss and that boss is part of a group of other bosses, how screwed can you get? While there are those who are genuinely nice, who understand and go out of their way to help, there are others who seem to have been put on this earth for the sole reason of making your life a living hell. If anyone else was in their position, they would be on the receiving end of a hissy fit. But no, these are our superiors. Unlike them, we still have something to prove. Whoever said that we should fight the Establishment was never a clerk.

My friends think I'm a little crazy, and more than a little bit sadistic. They can't understand why I can't make it to this party or that get-together on less than a month's notice. But even on one year's notice, there's very little you can do if you're on duty on that day or if at that exact moment, your patient decides that he wants to stop breathing. When you're so tired that you forget to eat, keeping your coffee date isn't exactly the top thing on your mind.

And when you do get together? It's hard to tell your friends about your day when they can't get what exactly you do in your day. There's also that little fact that while they all have careers, salaries and live independent lives, you're still relying on your parents for almost everything—room, board, tuition and (sigh) allowance. Not to mention the fact that you're the only one still worrying about tomorrow's exams. Let's face it: this life is murder on relationships.

I suppose some people must be wondering, "

Radical reforms to justify Proclamation No. 1017

IT IS LAMENTABLE THAT 20 years after the first People Power in EDSA, on the very day of the celebration of that historic event, a state of national emergency had to be declared by President Macapagal-Arroyo. To some, the declaration may be a bitter pill the nation has to swallow.

To us in the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDS), the situation being addressed by the declaration emphasizes the country's need for radical reforms. Together with our comrades in Alyson Sambayan, we will be vigilantly watching where this very strong measure taken by government will bring the country.

We urge the government to immediately pursue true and meaningful reforms to justify the necessity of its tough move and bring

solution to the current crisis. The most urgent reforms are those addressing corruption and poverty. Among these are:

- Political reforms, including electoral and judicial reforms, toward real people empowerment.
- Rural development anchored on an agrarian reform that emphasizes productivity.
- Industrialization that cares for the workers and makes full use of the country's human resources.
- Educational and cultural reforms toward moral transformation.
- National security measures, including strengthening the AFP and PNP.

At the same time, we call on the patriotic elements of the various sectors of Philippine so-

cietry to intensify their organization, expansion and consolidation as they push for social revolution. The social revolution much needed by our society can be assured only by a broad-based social movement committed to and working for this revolution.

Our two EDSA uprisings have shown that social change driven by politicians result only to leadership change within the political elite. Military-driven change will only lead to military rule. Only people-driven change can lead to a true social revolution.

—PEPING M. LUGAY,
head,
Public Information Department,
Partido Demokratiko
Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDS),
4-A Maalindog St.,
UP Diliman, Quezon City

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National emergency

WHILE NINOY AQUINO LIVED TO wipe the tears off people's eyes, the Arroyo administration is creating conditions that drive people to tears. It has suppressed the freedom of expression.

After attending Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales' first Mass as primate of the Church at the EDSA Shrine last Feb. 25, I proceeded to our radio program. Upon entering Radyo Veritas, I was intimidated and shocked to see three policemen. Perhaps, this is what the government means by "national emergency."

—JOHN FRANCIS M. LAGMAN,
media liaison officer,
Urban Poor Associates,
25A Mabuhay St.,
Barangay Central, QC

Violence against children

TWO SEEMINGLY UNRELATED articles in the Inquirer's Feb. 17 issue caught my attention: Michael Tan's "Drugs and the law"; and the news "Girl's death strikes fear in town." I personally believe they are somehow connected.

Tan's article was insightful. He correctly pointed out that much of our anti-drug campaign is focused on punitive measures rather than on addiction-prevention and rehabilitation. Indeed, most Western countries deal with addiction as a health issue—which explains the "fix" treatment Nora Aunor is getting from US courts. Here in the Philippines, we still view it through the prism of the criminal justice system.

The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 and the annual allotment for the Department of Health's drug rehabilitation programs (as compared to the military and police budget) show how poorly the government understands the drug problem. No wonder, in spite of the authorities' success in jailing pushers and seizing large quantities of drugs, the number of addicts in the Philippines keeps on growing. In 1992, the UN estimate was 700,000; last year, the Narcotics Command counted 8 million. We know fully well that

the number is much bigger.

At the rate things are going, the war against drug abuse will go on for several decades more. Meanwhile, more children will be forced to work in subhuman conditions because their fathers will be too busy making a career out of aluminum foils and water pipes, driving their mothers insane. Others will end up as collateral damage in drug deals (involving their parents) gone wrong. Still, others will die in the very hands of their paranoid parents. Little girls will be raped and brutally murdered and found dead in garbage dumps and rivers.

This is not a new phenomenon. Two decades ago, the same tragedy happened to little children in California. A man named Randy Fitzgerald conducted a thorough investigation. In his Reader's Digest article, "A Devil Stalks the Land," he warned the whole world about the direct link between drug abuse and violence against children.

Obviously, no one among us listened. Our present approach to the drug problem lacks contingencies to protect our little children while the drug war rages.

—RAY S. NOBLEZA,
55 San Ramon, Camaligan,
Camarines Sur 4401

Sad ideas of an opinion maker

I AM EXTREMELY SADDENED that a good professor and opinion maker like Solita Monsod can behave or pretend to be a "disinterested" intellectual in these times of crises. She's old enough to know that every action is political. One's decision to join or not to join the ongoing protests is a political act and serves a purpose: (in this case) either to oust Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from Malacañang or to keep her there. Even Monsod had her agenda when she wrote that column, so she should "get real."

People and groups of various political shades are coming together in a compromise of beliefs, to achieve the objective of ending a government in a state of lunacy. Soldiers are people like Monsod: they, too, have brain processes creating a set of principles. They are the servants

of the people—not of a commander in chief. The right to rebellion is an inviolable and universal right, it is not an act of adventurism.

I joined the recent protests but in ordinary days, I push local governments to allot a percentage of their budgets for women's causes and contraceptive supplies. Sometimes, my group connects with other advocacy groups to increase government's commitment to universal education. And the context of these actions is the assumption that government is not doing enough for its people.

Not that we can be heroes and redefine the meaning of EDSA. As a development worker, I feel that GMA should step down and all Filipinos should decide to fight for freedom from fear, poverty and oppression.

—MIRIAM AZURIN-ABAJA,
miriamazurin@yahoo.com



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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

New species of rare flower found

By Juan Escandor Jr.

Iriga City

A NEW SPECIES OF A rare flower known as Rafflesia exists in Mount Asog in Iriga City, according to the National Museum.

Dr. Domingo Madulid, curator of the National Museum's botany division, on Tuesday certified that the specimen presented to him was really a Rafflesia species and proposed the scientific name *Rafflesia irigaense* under the family of Rafflesiaceae.

Rafflesia, the largest known flower that stinks like rotting flesh, is found only in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Its biggest recorded size is 1.2 meters in diameter and the smallest, half a meter.

But what has been found in Asog was only 13 centimeters in diameter.

Of the 20 Rafflesia species discovered so far, four had been found in the Philippines, and the fifth and latest discovery in Asog, could be the smallest of its kind in the world.

The four confirmed species found in the country are *Rafflesia schadenbergiana* in Mt. Apo, believed to be already extinct because of deforestation; *Rafflesia speciosa* in Mt. Pors in Antique; *Rafflesia manillana* in Mt. Makiling; and *Rafflesia magnifica*, in Compostela Valley in 2003.

Parasite

Rafflesia has no visible plant body. It appears in reddish cabbage-shaped bloom during the reproductive cycle that develops nine to ten months after the bud appears from the forest floor. The bloom lasts only for three to five days.

Named after British zoologist Thomas Stamford Raffles, who discovered the first known species in



THE NEW species of Rafflesia found in Mt. Asog measures only 13 centimeters wide.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

1818 in Sumatra, the Rafflesia is a parasite that grows in a host, the tetrastigma or chestnut vine. In its early stages, the vine appears only as a tangle of fibers.

Researchers from the Camarines Sur State Agricultural College (CSSAC) have seen the flower on a trek to Asog on Feb. 9 after a group of mountaineers told them of their discovery.

Before Madulid confirmed the find, CSSAC Prof. Gertrude Gurlie Jaucian-Adan said several indicators proved that what had been found in Asog was Rafflesia—the presence of the host tetrastigma vine, the habitat in the slope of rocky crevices, and its physical characteristics like the perigone warts (white dots on petals) and

the shape of diaphragm.

Serendipity

"It was serendipity for me because I had been searching for its existence in Camarines Sur for years, considering that I had crossed out Mt. Asog from the possible places where I might discover Rafflesia," Jaucian-Adan claimed.

Asog couldn't possibly host the strange flower because the forest was degenerating, she said.

A day after Dominic Bagasina, a graduating education student of the University of St. Anthony in Iriga and member of the Alliance of Sumagang Outdoor Groups (Asog), found the purported latest species of Rafflesia, she was invited to lecture on biodiversity before Bagasina's group.

"The Asog members suddenly became restless and noisy when I showed them the slides of some of the most endangered and rarest species. One of them was Rafflesia," Jaucian-Adan said.

She said she asked the members what the fuss was all about and they told her that Bagasina found one. But she said she would not believe even as she was shown a photo taken with a mobile phone camera.

"I was still doubtful and teased him that he just superimposed the flower until the two of us trekked to the place where the Rafflesia blooms. I was shocked and happy to see three flowers with my own eyes after years of searching for them in other places," Jaucian-Adan recounted.

The professor-researcher took the coordinates of the exact location of the Rafflesia, brought a sample that they dissected and studied it at the laboratory of the CSSAC. She coordinated with the city government in securing the area.

Elusive

Bagasina said he was still overwhelmed by his discovery. He looked forward to the day when it could open a gateway for the conservation of Asog.



GIRLIE Jaucian-Adan trekked to Mt. Asog to identify the flower.

Iriga executives want mountain declared protected area

TO CONSERVE AND protect Mount Asog (Mount Iriga) from human exploitation and abuse, local officials of Iriga City in Camarines Sur have recommended to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources its declaration as a protected area.

Asog passed the criteria to qualify as a component of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS), according to an assessment conducted from Feb. 15 to March 11 last year by a DENR regional team.

Myrna G. Baylon, chief of the department's Protected and Wildlife Division, said the team's findings sub-

stantiated the recommendation for Asog to become an additional component of NIPAS under the "protected landscape" category.

The city government wants the mountain declared a protected area to stop slash-and-burn farming, illegal logging and other forms of human destruction that threaten wildlife in the mountain, according to Mayor Madelaine Afelor-Gazmen.

Among the endangered animal species found there are the black-naped oriole, white-eared brown dove, tarikitik, owl, crow, talon, dignas, sagaksook and wild pig.

Asog can also be tapped as a major source of water for the city and Buhi town in Camarines Sur, Gazmen said. It has seven waterfalls, unique rock formations, a scenic

view and a mountain peak, potentials for recreation and eco-tourism, she added.

Another reason for the mountain's protection, Gazmen said, was to prevent soil erosion, landslides and flooding that endanger lives and properties in the surrounding communities.

Elmer Sayson, an architecture student and vice chair of the Alliance of Sumagang Outdoor Group (Asog), said his group was willing to guide researchers who wanted to study wildlife species in the mountain.

He vowed to promote responsible mountaineering among the youths and make them realize the importance of biodiversity conservation.

Michael B. Jaucian and Niño Jesus Y. Orbata

Jaucian-Adan further described Rafflesia as the most elusive flower because the mortality ratio, that is, the buds that bloom, is 75.25.

She said the flowering episode is brief, with female flowers rare and seldom than the more numerous male ones.

The flowers exude a putrid scent, attract flies and carrion loaders that pollinate and fertilize them to become developed fruits underneath the ground where forest rats and insects hunt for food, she added.

Because of its elusive characteristics, Jaucian-Adan said there is a dearth of information about Rafflesia's biology although significant scientific researches had already been conducted.

Until now, she said, no study had yet been undertaken to determine how its seeds germinate and grow and why the Rafflesia associates itself only with the tetrastigma vine.

Jaucian-Adan said the three flowers that Bagasina discovered had already wilted and decayed, but there were still 15 buds in them that she hoped would bloom.



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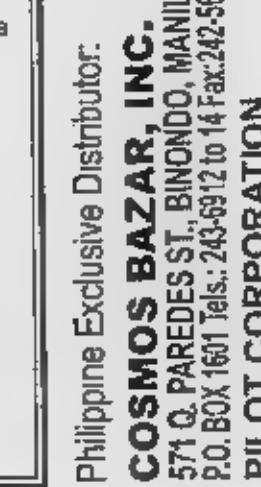
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Red leader in coup plot list already languishing in jail

A COMMUNIST LEADER listed by the Philippine National Police as among those to be arrested for allegedly plotting to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo has been in jail in Oriental Mindoro for more than a year now.

Senior Supt. Rolando Gonzales, warden of the Oriental Mindoro provincial jail, said Eduardo "Edu" Serrano, identified as Rogelio Villanueva in the PNP list, was arrested May 2, 2004 by the Oriental Mindoro police and the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

He was arrested with Josephine Joy Mendoza and Rizza Mesana in a bus in Iloilo City after they attended a meeting of the National Democratic Front.

But Serrano said police should not have arrested him because he was covered by an immunity agreement signed by the NDF and the government at that time.

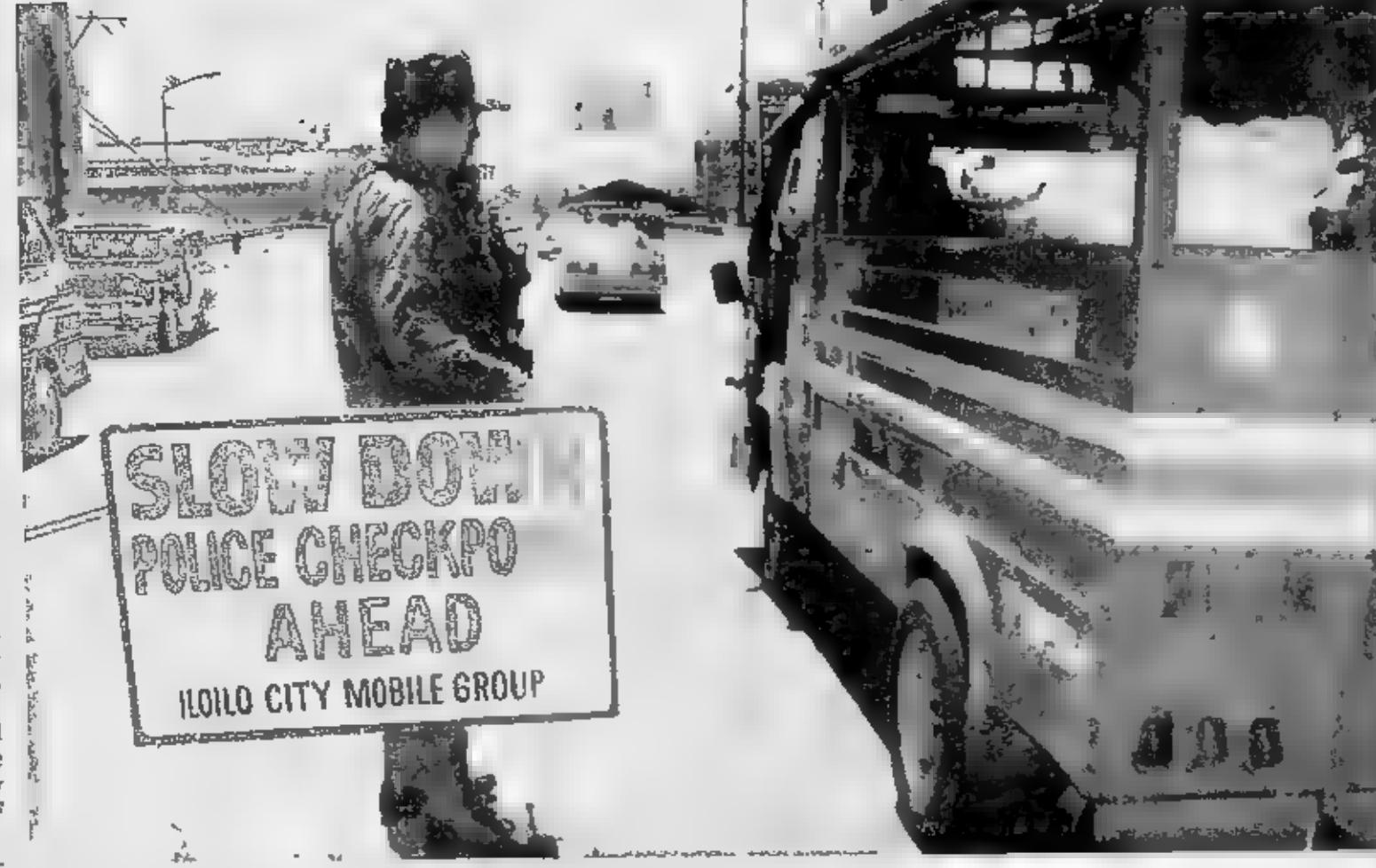
Police said the three were members of the New People's Army.

Supt. Alejandro Lapinid, then Mimaropa police chief, said Serrano's real identity was Rogelio Villanueva, allegedly the highest ranking CPP official in Mindoro.

He said "Eduardo Serrano" was just the nom de guerre of Villanueva. Lapinid said Villanueva was a common criminal.

Serrano's relatives and friends said authorities simply wanted to pin down Serrano on trumped up charges that he was Villanueva.

Lapinid said three warrants of arrest for rebellion and frustrated murder were issued for Serrano's capture. Marlon Ramos and Madonna Virgilio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



MAIN REACTION

The effects of the state of emergency declared by President Macapagal-Arroyo was also felt in Iloilo City where police set up checkpoints to intercept so-called destabilizers.

Kin of slain Bayan Muna leader appeal for GMA help

LUCENA CITY—THE FAMILY of slain militant teacher Napoleon Pomasdoro has appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to give justice to his death.

"One way to lessen the grief of losing my father is for President Arroyo to order the immediate resolution of the case. The murderer of my father should not just be made as another chilling in-

dex in the growing list of slain progressive leaders," said Zoe Pomasdoro, eldest daughter of the slain public high school teacher.

But although Zoe, also a teacher like her parents, admitted that her parents had been involved in the activist movement since the pre-martial law period, "he was no longer active just like before."

The victim and his wife, Beth, started their involvement in the activist movement during their college days at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños.

Zoe said that when her

mother had an acute ailment in the pancreas two years ago, her father stayed away from the mass movement and concentrated on caring for his sick wife.

"We want the government to speed up the process of the investigation. We want immediate justice for my father," she said.

The remains of Pomasdoro is now in Pagbilao town.

The victim's comrades from the militant movement still recognize the victim as the leader of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) in Quezon.

Pomasdoro was walking

home when ambushed by a lone gunman some 500 meters from his school late Monday afternoon.

The human rights group Karapatan in Quezon pointed to the military as the one responsible for the murder.

Army Maj. Jose Broso, spokesperson of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar here, declined to comment on the killing.

Broso said they did not have any information about the killing, except for what media reported. Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Copies of the group's statement, which the alliance is urging people to sign during the vigil, will be sent to Ms Arroyo, the Senate, House of Representatives, the International Federation of Journalists, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights.

Church men to launch protests vs 1017

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—CHURCH AND media groups in Negros Occidental are to mount separate activities to protest the issuance of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 placing the country in a state of national emergency.

Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra said a prayer rally was planned for March 8 at the Bacolod public plaza while concerned citizens and members of the clergy in Negros would issue a statement opposing Proclamation 1017.

Navarra described Proclamation 1017 as undemocratic because it curtails the rights of the people. "Many lawyers have also expressed the opinion that it is unconstitutional," he said.

Media practitioners in the province, united under the newly formed "Article 3 Alliance," are to stage a vigil in front of the Fountain of Justice here last night to denounce President Macapagal-Arroyo's issuance of Proclamation 1017 and moves to curtail press freedom.

The alliance urged all media practitioners to wear red as a sign of protest against the threat to press freedom.

It also called on the public to stand up and join the fight to protect their rights and liberties.

The group said they decided to stage the protest on Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, to remind Ms Arroyo that she should reflect on the need to uphold the people's rights.

The Negros media also vowed to resist all attempts of the Arroyo administration to prevent them from fully exercising their profession.

Copies of the group's statement, which the alliance is urging people to sign during the vigil, will be sent to Ms Arroyo, the Senate, House of Representatives, the International Federation of Journalists, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights.

Negros silica mining shut for pollution, taxes

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—NEGROS Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz ordered the closure on Monday of a silica mining operation in Barangay Maaslung in Ayungon town, 80 km north of here, for causing environmental and health problems in the area and for failing to pay local taxes.

Arnaiz ordered the permit of

Goodyield Resources Development Inc. (GRDI) suspended because of the numerous complaints he received from Ayungon residents, including its barangay and municipal officials, regarding the alleged health hazard posed by the silica quarry operation in Barangay Maaslung.

The governor, in his letter to GRDI on Monday, also raised concern over the complaint of resi-

dents about the "negative environmental impact (it had caused) on the land, river and seas within the municipality."

He also noted that the company has stopped paying taxes to barangay, municipal and provincial governments since January.

But Joseph Lo, head of GRDI, warned that the closure might affect the supply of cement in the country since at least nine big cement factories in the

Philippines are getting their supply of silica from GRDI. Silica is one of the main ingredients in the manufacture of cement.

Lo said GRDI is producing 20,000 to 30,000 metric tons of silica a month.

Lo also said that GRDI has been religiously complying with all the required measures to prevent environmental destruction in the area.

'Jueteng' substitute starts Quezon dry run

LUCENA CITY—THE MUCH-awaited rebirth of the Small Town Lottery, an old numbers game of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office that is similar to jueteng, started here on Tuesday.

Romy Quinones, PCSO manager of special projects department, said the STL operation based here would cover the province's 40 towns.

"This is a pilot STL project. As a matter of fact, we're only on a dry run. It's not yet fully operational," Quinones said.

He said another STL operation in Angeles City in Pampanga would also start in the coming days.

Mayor Edward Hagedorn of Puerto Princesa City, head of the national anti-jueteng task force who had pushed for the return of STL operation as the best legal substitute to jueteng, predicted that the government stood to earn anywhere from P6 billion to P10 billion a year if the latest government-sanctioned numbers game would be allowed to operate in the whole country.

The STL, which the adminis-

tration of former president Corazon Aquino ran from 1987 to 1990, failed to eradicate the decades-old jueteng after it ended up being a "front" for jueteng operators and the "cash cow" of corrupt local government officials and law enforcers.

'Shameful substitute'

Lungay-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, an anti-jueteng advocate, had earlier dismissed STL as a "shameful substitute" for jueteng.

The lottery has distinct similarities to jueteng, which only has 1-37 numbers in every draw, unlike STL which has 1-40 numbers.

A P1 bet wins P70 in STL. Jueteng offers a bigger prize of P90 for every peso bet.

The PCSO granted the franchise for the STL operation in Quezon to Piroquette Corp. based in Manila.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan allowed the company to operate the STL through Resolution No. 2005-676 dated Oct. 3, 2005.

A certain Jose Francisco Gon-

other beneficiaries

The STL operation is expected to conduct at least three draws daily where bets will be placed on two numbers from 1 to 40.

The 17-40 combination won the first draw after the inauguration and blessing ceremony of the new office.

Mass

Mass was held in the company premises a couple of blocks away north of the Saint Ferdinand Cathedral in the central part of the city.

Senior Supt. Vicente Caragan Jr., Quezon police chief, said with the start of the STL, which employs former jueteng bet collectors, the police could now focus their attention on fighting criminality and insurgency.

"Unlike before when we were always running after jueteng bet collectors. The STL will also erase public perception that the police are on the payroll of jueteng operators," Caragan said. Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



zales was the signatory in the Piroquette letter to the provincial council, in his capacity as corporate secretary.

Resolution

In the resolution, the provincial board said it allowed the STL operation because part of the income of the PCSO would benefit the poor by way of financial and medical assistance.

Portions of the game proceeds will also go to local government units and the Philippine National Police, among

CEBU PORT AUTHORITY
CIP Complex, Sogno Grande Boulevard, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City
Telephone: 232-1811 to 57
Fax No. 232-6584

AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (AMENDED)

The Cebu Port Authority (CPA), North Reclamation Area, Cebu City through its Bids and Award Committee (BAC), invites all interested consultants to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Engagement of Financial Advisor for the Corporation and Privatization of the Cebu Port Authority.

Interested Consultants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) through the BAC Secretariat on or before March 13, 2006.

The eligibility requirements may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat starting March 14, 2006. Eligibility requirements/documents shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the BAC Secretariat no later than 9:00 P.M. of March 23, 2006. Sealed envelopes submitted shall be immediately opened after the deadline. The eligibility of registered bidders shall be evaluated using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria based on the indicated eligibility requirements. Based on such evaluation, the BAC Secretariat will issue the list of short-listed consultants on April 4, 2006.

The bid documents shall be made available to all eligible and short-listed consultants by the BAC Secretariat starting April 5, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00).

The Pre-bid Conference for all consultants who have purchased the bid documents shall be held at 10:00 A.M. on April 12, 2006 at the Conference Room, Cebu Port Authority.

All bids should be submitted to the BAC Secretariat on or before 3:00 P.M. on April 24, 2006 at the Conference Room, Cebu Port Authority. All bids submitted shall be opened in public view immediately after the lapse of the deadline.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Screening, Bid Security Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Contractuation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

CPA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid. CPA reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive any formality/defect therein, and to accept such bid as may be deemed most advantageous to the government.

For inquiries, please contact the BAC Secretariat at 412-8027.

(Bldg.) MARCO G. TAN
BAC Chairman
Noted by
(Sgd.) MARIANO C.J. MARTINEZ
General Manager
*AMENDED INVITATION TO BID PUBLISHED LAST FEBRUARY 20 AND 27, 2006

IPN-March 2 & 9, 2006

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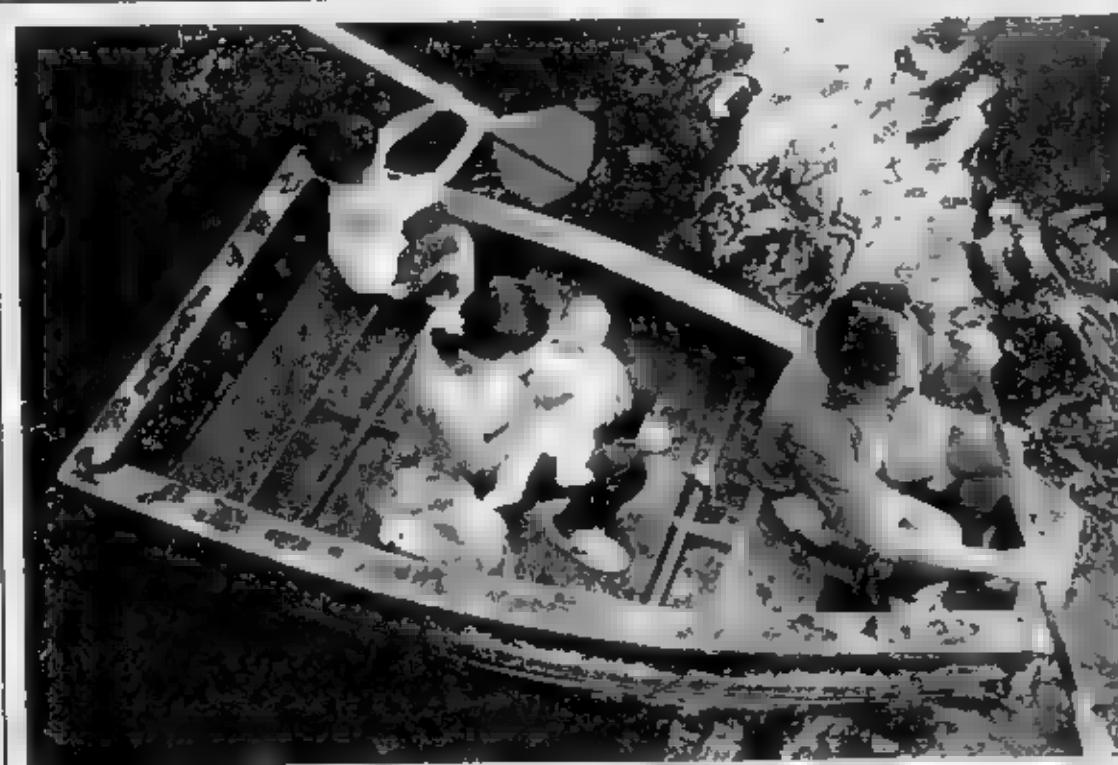
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TIME OUT

A family takes a leisurely boat ride in a lagoon inside the Manila Zoo.

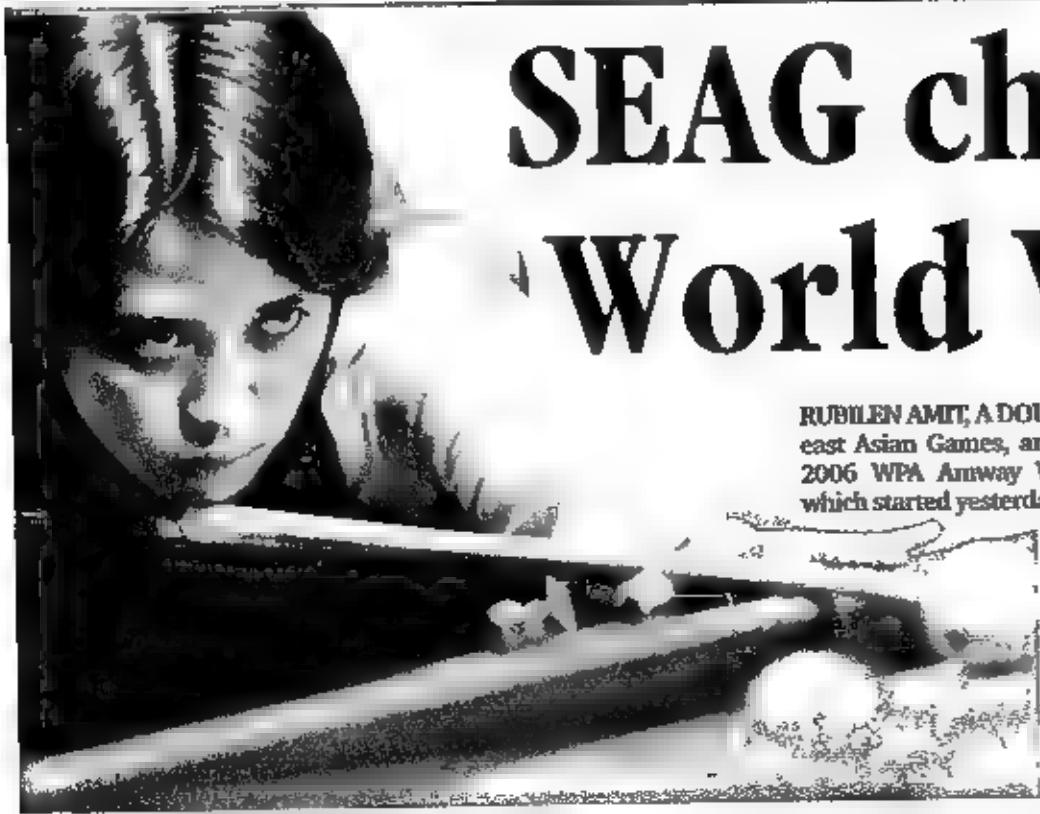
RUFFY LERMA

Photo by Ruffy Lerma

SPORTS

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres



AMIT aims for the big bucks and international acclaim.

SEAG champion Amit joins World Women's 9-ball tilt

RUBILEN AMIT, A DOUBLE GOLD medalist in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, and Johanna Dee are competing in the 2006 WPA Amway Women's World 9-Ball Championship which started yesterday at the Taipei Stadium in Taiwan.

The five-day event ending on March 5 offers a \$70,000 total pot and boasts a strong field headed by defending champion Kim Ga-young of South Korea, Jennifer Barretta of the US, Helena Thornfeldt of Sweden, Lynette Horsburgh and Valerie Finnie of Britain, Yukiko Hamanishi of Japan, Wendy Jans of Belgium and the host country's Chun-Chen Chen, Sha-Han Chang and Hsiang-Ling Tan.

The 24-year-old Amit, who ruled the 8-ball and 9-ball singles in the last SEAG, and Dee are playing under the auspices of billiards patron Ansteo "Putch" Puyat and Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Ernesto "Ernie" Pajardo.

Amit, winner of the 2002 Asian 8-Ball Championship in Singapore, made local history by becoming the first woman to qualify in the National Open men's finals after an unbeaten run in the fourth leg of the qualifying round.

She is also the first Filipina to qualify in the tough Japan Open 9-ball

tournament in the mid '90s after beating consistent Asian Games and SEA Games medalist Lee Van Cortez in the qualifying round held in Manila.

Dee is the playing captain of the 2005 SEAG ladies' team.

The 26-year-old Kim, known as the "Seoul Sensation" and "Little Devil Girl," is also the reigning US Ladies Open and APA Ladies Open titlist.

The winner of the event brings home \$20,000, with the runner-up getting \$10,000. The losing semi-finalists receive \$5,000 each. Marlon Bernardino, contributor

PSC to appeal '06 budget today

By Musong R. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS Commission will pursue its appeal to the Department of Budget and Management for at least a budget of P104 million for the year during a hearing in the lower house today.

The DBM had cut the PSC budget to only P28 million for 2006 and the government sports agency is seeking the aid of the legislators to have this jacked up to at least the level of last year's allocation.

"We have friends in the House of Representatives who are very concerned," PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez said. "The DBM cut our budget and only a



RAMIREZ

bicameral decision can change that."

Ramirez clarified that it was not the Senate which slashed the PSC budget this year. The P28 million that was published, Ramirez added, was the amount approved by the DBM.

Cycling and volleyball—who have changed the names of their associations and are likely to escape the liquidation requirements of the PSC.

The Philippine Amateur Cycling Association is now the Philippine Cycling Federation and the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association is now the Philippine Volleyball Federation.

Cycling and volleyball have more than P6 million and P5 million unliquidated advances, respectively.

The PSC said that no additional funding will be released to NSAs with unliquidated advances, but changing the name of NSAs, Garcia admitted, is a way around the new PSC rule.

GREAT DEALS OF QUALITY

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ISUZU ELF ALUM VAN TRUCK

ISUZU 15T CARGO TRUCK (Double Differential)

AUF, WNC cagers stay unbeaten

LEGAZPI CITY—ANGELES UNIVERSITY Foundation and West Negros College continued to show impressive forms with lopsided victories yesterday in the 60th National Students Basketball Championship at the Albay Astrodome here.

The AUF Great Danes routed local squad Divine Word College, 111-67, while the WNC Mustangs whipped another Region V squad in Aquinas University, 101-62.

AUF and WNC showed the way in

Groups B and A, respectively, with three straight wins in the tournament organized by the Basketball Association of the Philippines in cooperation with the Albay provincial government and the city of Legazpi.

The Big City teams, however, stayed in contention in this event sponsored by Air21 Express, Burlingreen Socks, Healthy Options, ML Kuana Padala, Baker's Fair and Summit Mineral Water.

Defending champion University of Perpetual Help-Rizal swamped East-

ern Visayas State University, 114-52, and trailed WNC with a 2-1 record.

National University also bounced back from an opening-day shocker with two wins, the last a 102-62 dumping of the San Pedro College of Business and Arts.

Meanwhile, in Daet, Camarines Norte, Zamboanga City's Southern City College surprised favored Cebu's Salazar College of Science and Technology, 97-89, at the start of the secondary championship at the Agro Multi-

Purpose and Recreational Center.

But Cebu's other team, University of Southern Philippines, proved too much for University of Batangas, 123-60.

In other matches, Iloilo Central High School leaned on Jayson Salvado's three triples in the final six minutes to beat Davao City's Emar Learning Center, 85-74, while St. Claire Academy of the National Capital Region whipped Tacloban City's Asian Development Foundation College, 122-64.

M Lhuillier new BAP chair

LEGAZPI CITY—THE BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines named Michel Lhuillier, a well-known businessman-sportsman from Cebu, as its new chair re-

cently.

Lhuillier was elected unani-

mously during the 60th BAP

National Congress held at the

Cagsawa Hall of the Albay As-

trodome here following the resignation of Quinteliano "Tiny" Literal.

The Congress was held si- multaneous with the opening of the 60th National Students Basketball Championship.

Councilor Raul "Yayoy" Al- coseba was elected the new BAP vice president for Visayas.

NBC, Prime Channel ink partnership

BONDED BY THEIR DESIRE TO PROMOTE regional basketball in the country, National Basketball Conference and Prime Channel recently inked a deal making the latter NBC's official cable partner.

NBC secretary general Tito Palma and Prime Channel program director Bob Novales signed the Memorandum of Agreement at the NBC office in Quezon City.

"We're glad to continue being part of NBC's plan of reaching out to the real basketball fans all over the country," said Novales.

NBC games and highlights will be aired on Prime Channel through cable providers including Destiny (Charmel 64), Sky Camanava, carriers in Las Piñas, Parañaque and most parts of Cavite.

"This is our third year working with Prime Channel and it's a pleasant partnership," said NBC president Nathaniel "Tic" Padilla. "Come our opening on March 10, basketball fans can again expect more intense competition and better coverage."

Tagaytay City Mayor and NBC executive vice president Bambol Tolentino will host the North Division opening on March 10 while Pagadian City Mayor Sammy Co will host the Southern Division inaugurations on March 17.

Coach E opens Alabang branch

COACH E BASKETBALL SCHOOL BRINGS personalized and quality basketball training to the south as it announced the opening of its branch at the San Beda College Alabang in Muntinlupa City.

International Basketball Academy (IBA) and Coach E instructors Xavy Nuning said the new venue was due to the strong clamor from parents and kids from south of Metro Manila.

The new branch covers the areas of Muntinlupa, Cavite, Laguna and Batangas. Coach E classes are also being held at The Zone in Makati and the clubosity in Libis, Quezon City. The initial eight sessions at the venue inside Ayala-Alabang Village will start in May. Interested individuals and groups may contact 631-1195 or 0921-7562639 and email address iba_phil@yahoo.com.

Actual registration will be held at the club six from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on March 18 and 25. Leveling of entries is set April 21 and 22.



REVTEX ROCKET: Glenn Aguilar shows the form that made him beat New Zealand star James Robinson twice in the Pro 125 of the 2006 Supercross International Championship Series at the RBL Stadium in Talisay City, Negros Occidental recently. Aguilar, nicknamed the Revtex Rocket due to his speed and high-flying moves, has nine national crowns and a FIM Asia Pacific championship.

UP Vanguard golfest today

THE UP VANGUARD NATIONAL Commanders Cup will be played today at the Ayala Greenfield Golf and Leisure Club in Laguna.

The 18-hole golf tourney aims to boost the campaign for a renewed interest on the Resolved Officers Training Corps.

Royal Capital Securities Corp. is major supporter of the event organized by The UP Vanguard Inc., the alumni organization of the UP ROTC Corps of Officers.

Hole-in-one sponsors are Tief Company/Club Car, Euro-motors Corp., Josol Home Décor Industrial Improvement Center and CICI General Insurance Corp. Hole sponsors include Ace Hardware and Southeast Asia Foods, Inc. while half hole sponsors are No Fear, Camp John Hay Dev't Corp., Alexander's Wear, Levi's Strauss Phil., Inc., VGD Lino Magpantay, VGD Winston Tony Santos, Rep. Francis Nepomuceno, Antonio Evangelista of

New Kanlaon Construction, lawyer Eladio Pasamio and Air21/Corporate Air.

A Club Car, a kinetic Moped 50cc bicycle, a Jacuzzi and P50,000 are among the hole-in-one prizes. There will be a lot of tournament and raffle prizes including a trip to Boracay for two with three days and two nights stay at Club Panol.

The UP Vanguard aims to motivate the youth to take up ROTC courses and install the values of patriotism and love of country.

PBA strong as ever

IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN this.

The PBA has quickly gotten a replacement for Shell in Welcoat. If that's not brick-wall confidence in the league, what is?

The PBA has quickly recaptured Leo Austria, generally considered the most celebrated coach in the league's 2004-2005 season for having steered the virtually starless Shell to heights during his short coaching stint. The soft-spoken Austria has been hired to coach Welcoat, a team that has practically won all PBL titles in sight long before it bought the Shell franchise.

The five-peso formula to reiterate the league's time-tested mission to serve the best interest of its fans did miracles. It translated, among others, into consistent overflow crowds that's never been seen before in the 30-year history of the league.

And now this, another overseas PBA game to spice up the concluding conference of the season. Surely, that March 19 game in Hong Kong featuring Talk 'N Text and Purefoods makes for a corpsed statement from the league since the Hong

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

Kong bash will only mark the second time that the PBA gets to play an official game in its calendar outside Philippine shores.

Wasn't it only a while ago when doomsday advocates predicted the inevitable collapse of Asia's first play-for-pay loop, triggered mainly by what many called the entry of Fil-Shams?

Well, it hasn't happened, it isn't happening.

In contrast, things have been looking up and indications point to more smashing successes for the PBA under commissioner Eala and newly elected chair Ely Capacio.

As I keep saying here, you just can't put an institution down that easily. The PBA is here to stay because, through the years, it's been a well-run conclave composed most-

ly of some of the finest, most respected corporations in the land.

I was in Davao City for the 59th edition of the PAL Interclub Golf Championship when Marie Angelina, the beautiful daughter of Dave and Jenny Floro, celebrated her 18th birthday with pomp and gaiety on Feb. 24 at the Grand Ballroom of the Alabang Country Club. Had I been around, I would have amended the occasion if only in fond memory of Danny Floro, the late, well-loved grand daddy of Marie Angelina.

To those too young to know, Danny Floro was the main architect of the two PBA Grand Slams won in 1976 and 1983 by Crispa, the basketball team managed almost flawlessly by Danny, whose legendary charm and charisma have remained unequalled to this day.

My felicitations go to Dave, who is more than a brother to me, and Jenny for having produced a wonderful daughter in Marie Angelina.

Danny Floro would have been proud.

Oftentimes, the boxing fans are the hardest to please. For example, many of them were displeased when Brian Viloria could only score a points victory over Jose Antonio Aguirre in retaining his WBC lightweight crown recently in Las Vegas, Nevada.

I know the reason: Because they saw Viloria score an easy, first-round knockout victory in his last fight, they were almost cussing he'd repeat the feat—a knockout victory, no less.

But boxing is so unpredictable a sport that, oftentimes, what is generally expected to happen does not happen. Clay knocking Liston out in 1963 was not expected. Hagler knocking Hearns out in 1987 was not expected. And Pacquiao knocking Barrera out in 2003 was not expected. In short, boxing is almost the most unexpected of all sports.

So, stop fretting, please?

Anyway Viloria is the champ, is our champ. That should put the issue to rest.

Comments to merju@pld21.net

Madrigal posts back-to-back wins

ALESSANDRA MADRIGAL, DRIVING for ING Private Banking, swept the penultimate and final rounds of the KT Invitational 2006 karting series held over the weekend at the Carmona Circuit in Cavite.

The 10-year-old karting prodigy stamped her class over a field of veterans led by 2004 Karter of the Year Matteo Guidicelli, two-time Rocar Max World Championship campaigner Marlon Stockinger and eventual series champion Indy Villalon.

Madrigal, who has campaigned extensively in Southeast Asia during the past year, started the final race in fifth place then chased the pacemakers. During the 25-lap race, she kept up with the furious pace set by Stockinger, Guidicelli and Villalon before slipping past to take the checkered flag for her first win in the series.

In last Sunday's final event, Madrigal engaged Guidicelli in a race-long battle that saw her swap leads with the former national karting champion. She set a

time of 46.886, which was surpassed by Stockinger (46.835) on the last lap. Madrigal crossed the line .482 of a second ahead of Guidicelli to chalk up her second win in the series.

Madrigal attributed her results to her mentor and former world karting champion Terry Fullerton.

"We learned more

from Terry in a couple of sessions than in the two years I've been racing."

Villalon secured the overall championship with 156 points. Madrigal finished second with 143.

Samsung Am grand finals on at Summit

LIPA, BATANGAS—lucky substitute Jong Laput bids for a second championship division title in four years in the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour grand finals starting today at the Summit Point Golf and Country Club in Lipa, Batangas.

But Laput will need a lot more than luck to achieve his goal as he goes up against four of the best amateur talents in the country in a 72-hole battle for the crown in this culmination of a nationwide circuit that is expected to be full of action and drama.

Three of them—Mike Bibat, Tonton Asistio and Erwin Vinluan—are his teammates with Manila Southwoods while the fourth, Boyet Saragosa is a vital cog of the Canlubang squad that recently ruled the PAL Interclub in Davao.

Bibat, a member of the gold medal-winning Southeast Asian Games team, sets out as the man to beat while the 16-year-old Asistio is the player most likely to pull off a surprise.

Laput, winner of the nation's finals of the inaugural edition in 2003, is coming in as a replacement for Terence Macatangay who can't make it due to academic pressure at the University of Oregon where he is a golf scholar.

"Considering that they are just coming from a big battle like the PAL Interclub should put them in the right shape to shoot low rounds," said Boyet Ocampo of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group.

Philippine Airlines, the official carrier, flew in the provincial entries of the Samsung Tour from its qualifying points in Pueblo de Oro and Bacolod. The other backers are Tokyo Tokyo, KZG, Microlot, Copperstone Sport, Srixon, Sunbolt, Rudy Project, C-Lum Fiber and Sports Plus.



MADRIGAL attributes her success to new mentor, former world champion Terry Fullerton.

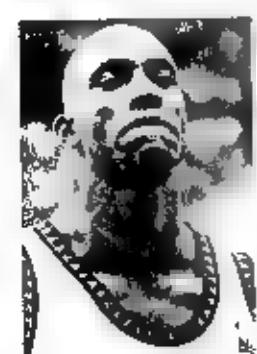
THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2006

SPORTS

A19

NBA fines Garnett, Wallace

NEW YORK—MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES All-Star forward Kevin Garnett was fined \$5,000 by the NBA for throwing a ball into the stands, the league said on Monday.



GARNETT



WALLACE

REUTERS

Garnett was fined for kicking a ball into the stands at the end of Friday's game with the Denver Nuggets.

Wallace was penalized for elbowing Cleveland Cavaliers center Zydrunas Ilgauskas on the head.

Reuters

NBA on SOLAR: 10 a.m. —Philadelphia vs. Houston (replay at 8 p.m.)

The ball hit a fan in Sunday's game against the Memphis Grizzlies, but the fan was not seriously injured, The Star Tribune of Minneapolis reported.

Garnett said he threw the ball after becoming frustrated with the officiating in the game, which Minnesota won, 105-99. He was ejected because of the incident and later apologized to the fan.

"By no means was I trying to hit a fan," Garnett said.

The NBA also fined the Timberwolves' Ricky Davis and the Detroit Pistons' Rasheed Wallace \$5,000 each for separate incidents, the league said.

Davis was fined for kicking a ball into the stands at the end of Friday's game with the Denver Nuggets.

Wallace was penalized for elbowing Cleveland Cavaliers center Zydrunas Ilgauskas on the head.

Reuters

HOWARD: Wasted heroes

AP



THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: For most of the year, they were almost always—literally—in the driver's seat. Thus, the country's top racers receive their Golden Wheel trophies for their achievements last year. Honored were (left to right)—Pepon Marave, AF3; Jody Coseteng, Touring Cars; Glenn Aguilar,

Motocross; Albert Monte de Ramos, 4x4 Off-Road; Jolet Jao, Road Racing; Leo Joel Cordero, Drag Racing; Lee Burngarner, father of Michelle Burngarner, Karting; Daryl Flores, Slalom, and Ross Jamison, Southeast Asian Karter of the Year.

ROMY HOMILLADA

Se's 'bum' knee voids Giants-Express trade

By June Navarro

HOMER SE'S SURGICALLY-REPAIRED knee failed to pass the scrutiny of several team doctors yesterday, voiding a trade between Air21 and Purefoods.

The Giants thus returned the volatile, 6-foot-5 power forward to its sender, Air21, after doubts were cast on the health of Se's knee, which had already undergone a major operation early in his career.

Air21 coach Bo Perasol said Dr. George Canlas of Purefoods suggested that Se might not be fit to play for the Giants next conference, pointing out that the surgical procedure on the player's left knee was done improperly.

The player was sent to a San Miguel physician for a second opinion, but the assessment was still the same.

Se had gone under the knife to repair

an anterior cruciate ligament tear on his right knee which he suffered while playing for the Cebu Gems in the defunct Metropolitan Basketball Association.

He underwent a second ACL operation in December 2004 supervised by Dr. Gary Eufemo.

A magnetic resonance imaging screening on Se's left knee also revealed a meniscal tear but Air21 team physician Jim Rafanan claimed surgery wouldn't be necessary.

Rafanan also said the tear could in no way aggravate the operation on the left knee.

"There's no need for an operation to correct that tear," Rafanan told the INQUIRER. "It only needs strengthening exercises to get it back in shape. In fact, that tear is already 80 percent healed."

With Se heading back for the Express, the Giants will reclaim the 2006 second-

round pick they had given up in the exchange for the cager Eugene Tejada, who was shipped along with Se to Purefoods, will also return to the Air21 camp.

The Purefoods-Air21 trade was an offshoot of a swap between the Express and San Miguel Beer. The Express sent Wesley Gonzales for the Beermen's 2006 second-round pick and Eugene Tejada before dealing Se and Tejada to Purefoods.

"If I could have my way, Homer would be better off with Purefoods," said Perasol.

The bungled deal was a devastating blow to the Giants, who lost power forward Jordan Salvador to the injury list.

Salvador ruptured his right knee during the PBA Fiesta Conference Finals won by Red Bull. Salvador is out for the season since it will take nine months for the former PBL MVP to heal completely.



FILIPINO DIOSDADO "PRINCE" GABI, who will attempt to become a world champion on Sunday, leaves today for Sta. Ynez, California for his 12-round bout with Vic Darchinyan.

Gabi will try to unseat the Australian flyweight champ at the Chumash Casino Resort.

The brash-talking Darchinyan will defend his IBF and IBO titles against the soft-spoken southpaw from Davao City, who is bidding to give the country another world title following the successful WBC light flyweight defense of Fil-Am Brian Viloria recently.

So confident is Darchinyan he said he would let the Filipino decide when it's time for his rival to get knocked out.

The Chumash Casino Resort, which is a two-hour drive from the Wild Card Boxing Club, is located in

Santa Barbara County in California between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Gabi, his manager Michael Koncz, and retired police officer Robert Peters will take the three-hour drive from Koncz's residence in Orange County.

Trainer Freddie Roach, cutman Joe Chavez and Roach's assistant trainer Eric Brown will leave Wild Card tomorrow and arrive prior to the official weigh-in which is set at 5 p.m. inside the hotel.

Also scheduled to take the ring tomorrow is Jeudy Martinez, Gabi's personal fitness instructor.

Gabi weighed in at 113.5 lbs on the electronic scale provided yesterday by Koncz, who expects his ward to easily meet the 112-lb limit on Friday's weigh-in.

Gabi sparred for the last time Friday. Salven Lagumbay, contributor

PHOTO: AP

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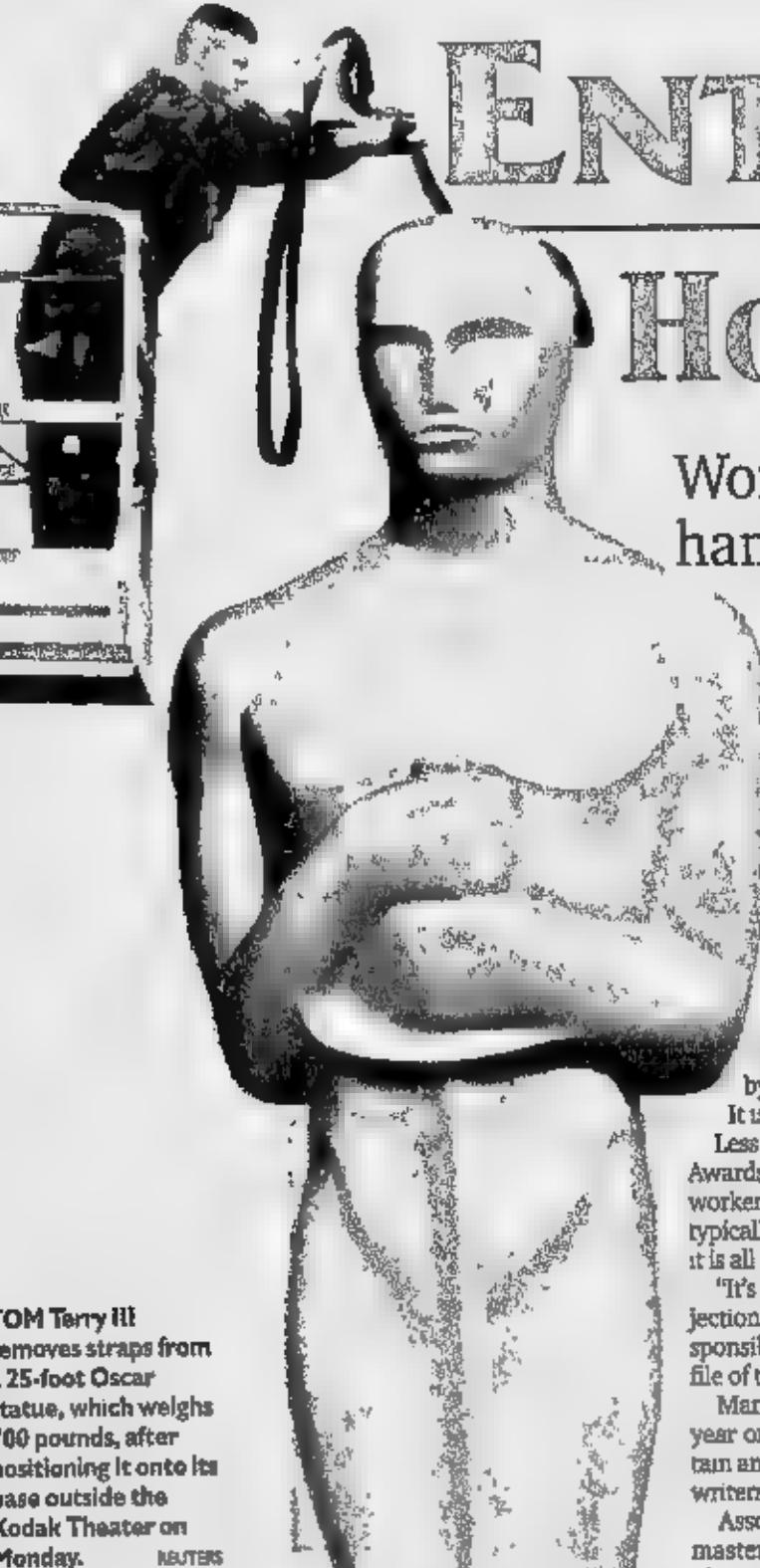


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TOM Terry III removes straps from a 25-foot Oscar statue, which weighs 700 pounds, after positioning it onto its base outside the Kodak Theater on Monday. **REUTERS**

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KNOW...**

ON MARCH 6, 8 p.m., at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental, "Red Carpet Manila 2006" will be held. The black-tie affair is described as "a gala of the 78th Academy Awards." Actually, guests will just watch the Oscars program held in Hollywood earlier in the day.

HOLLYWOOD/A2-2

Workers have fun hammering Oscar sets together

LOS ANGELES—A 26-FOOT (8-meter)-tall golden Oscar stands backstage at the Kodak Theater amid a sea of black crates.

A dance-rehearsal room is now an office for 50 production workers, complete with desks, phones, computers—and a table topped with coffee, chips and Krispy Kreme doughnuts.

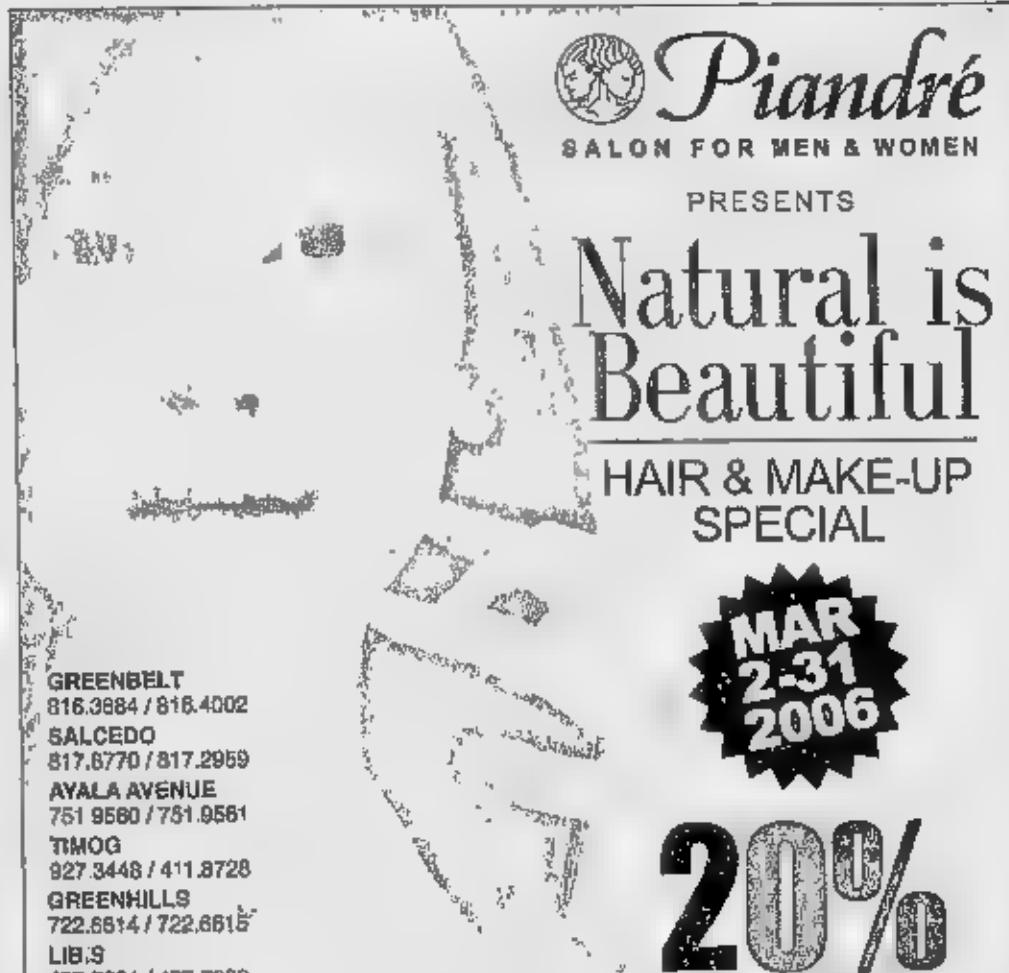
A hallway is becoming a glamorous green room, designed to look like an old-fashioned movie theater lobby. Posters from this year's Best Picture nominees line the wall, illuminated by overhead lights being adjusted by a man perched precariously on a ladder.

It is the Oscars countdown. Less than a week before the March 5 Academy Awards, the Kodak Theater is abuzz with some 1,500 workers, most of them toiling with a fan-like fervor not typically found on Hollywood sets. For this happy crew, it is all about crafting the movie world's biggest night.

"It's the most prestigious show, absolutely," said projectionist Dave Taylor, the 17-year Oscar veteran responsible for all moving pictures on stage. "It's the profile of the show, the caliber of the people on the show."

Many on the staff work together throughout the year on other big productions. But the Oscars still retain an element of magic for everyone, from artists and writers to the lighting guys and sound technicians.

Associate producer Michael Seligman, budget master and veteran of 29 Oscar productions, snapped photos of the crews at work.



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ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2006

'Little films' dominate nominees

LOS ANGELES—A STELLAR PACK of small-budget and independent movies have left big studio epics out in the cold in this year's Oscars race, even if most moviegoers have not seen the top films.

Once the sole domain of Hollywood's major studios, next week's Academy Awards will be dominated by the "little films" that far outnumber the usual multimillion-dollar blockbusters.

"It's very unusual to see that four out of five of the Best Picture nominees are independent or low-budget films; it used to be the other way round," said Marty Grove, a columnist for Hollywood Reporter online.

"If they are not truly independently made, they are at least made by the independent divisions of big studios," he told AFP.

Most moviegoers haven't seen top contenders

Universal Studios' \$75-million epic "Munich," directed by Steven Spielberg, is the only exception—all of the other contenders—"Brokeback Mountain," "Crash," "Good Night, and Good Luck," and "Capote"—were relatively cheap to make and were at least partly financed by private investors.

Oscar smiled on independent films, as the big Hollywood studios' box office returns dwindled amid an avalanche of remakes and sequels.

The favorite this year, the gay cowboy love story "Brokeback

Mountain," has eight nominations, including Best Picture, Director and Actor, and leads a pack of unusually thoughtful contenders.

Tag prices

Ang Lee's film cost just \$14 million to make and was co-financed by Sony Independent Pictures by the co-owner of the Minnesota Twins baseball team.

Director George Clooney's \$7.5-million "Good Night, and Good Luck," was co-financed by the Dallas Mavericks basketball team's owner and by Jeff Skoll, one of the founders of eBay.

Paul Haggis' "Crash"—which won six nods, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Supporting Actor for Matt Dillon—cost \$6.5 million and was financed by a real-estate mogul.

The Truman Capote story "Capote" cost \$7 million and won six nods, including Best Picture, Best Actor for Philip Seymour Hoffman, Best Supporting Actress for Catherine Keener and Best Director. It was co-financed by independent Canadian production firm Infinity Media.

Other small-budget films that pepper the nominees' list: "Hustle and Flow," "Syriana" and "Transamerica." The latter, which stars Best Actress nominee Felicity Huffman, cost just \$1 million.

The big-budget offerings include Sony's \$85-million "Memoirs of a Geisha," with six nods; "Munich," with five; the \$29-million "Walk the Line," with five; and "King Kong," which cost more than \$200 million and won four nods.

Marc Lavine, AFP

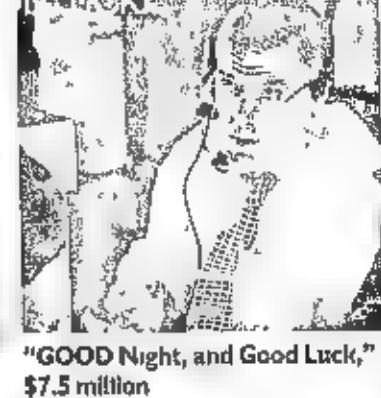


"CAPOTE," \$7 million



"CRASH," \$6.5 million

"TRANSAMERICA," \$1 million



"GOOD Night, and Good Luck," \$7.5 million

Hollywood's ...

From page A2-1

"This is a show that fulfills dreams," he says. "Every year is new; every set, different."

Sunday, the seats inside the Kodak will be filled with some of the most famous posteriors. For now, those seats serve as makeshift desks for the art department as it puts the finishing touches on the massive Oscar stage.

Best part

"This is the best part," says assistant art director Joe Celi. Months ago, he built a tiny version of the set out of paper, wood and foam.

The art deco-inspired stage includes two 18-foot, clear acrylic Oscars meant to look like frosted glass, as well as swirling silver conches, majestic pillars, an old-fashioned movie theater box office and a 65-foot wide grand movie marquee with "Oscar" written above it in sweeping white letters.

"There's probably 100 million pixels in the thing," says 13-time Oscar producer Gil Cates, adding that it was designed to evoke the feeling of a classic movie house, "before they became multiplexes."

The board will change throughout the show, announcing categories, nominees and winners.

The entire Oscar team will be working almost around the clock until show time. Little changes on the set and tweaks to the script will continue until then. Sandy Cohen, AP

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| ATC | 1 PRIDE & PREJUDICE | 2 FEARLESS | 3 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA | 4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 |
| ACC | 1 FEARLESS | 2 WALK THE LINE | 3 PRIME | 4 CLOSE TO YOU |
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THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2006

ENTERTAINMENT

Stars' scions start to make their mark

IT'S WONDERFUL TO HEAR THAT Kuh Ledesma's lovely singing scion, Isabella, is finally coming into her own as a jazz artist.

Isabella first generated excitement some years ago, but her potential didn't find full fruition until recently. Now that she's been launched by way of a Valentine concert with Richard Merk, she's finally on her way.

The Kuh-Isabella tandem is by no means the only interesting mother-daughter pairing on the local musical scene these days.

The Pinky Marquez-Karel Marquez tandem is also exciting. Pinky is known to have one of the highest soprano voices in entertainment, and has also won acclaim as a comedienne, musical theater star and member of the Ang Four quartet.

Karel has proven to be similarly versatile. Not only does she sing well; she's also a cool MTV host and a teen fave.

Pilita Corrales and her daughter Jackieou Blanco are eminently successful in their own right—Pilita as Asia's Queen of Songs, and Jackieou as a singer, actress, TV personality and fitness buff and exponent.

Stage actress and "digital film queen" Irma Adlawan has a lovely and talented daughter, Ira Marasigan,



KUH'S Isabella

ready popular as a singer and actress. We hope that Zsa Zsa and Karylle will perform together in a major production this year.

Acclaimed singer Mon David has a gifted and beautiful daughter, Nicole David, now a musical theater star. Nicole sings with her father in some of his shows, and after she finishes college, we trust she'll give her performing career her full attention.

Another dad who has a musically talented daughter (Hannah) is Yoyoy Villame. And, in the field of dance, Gary V is happy that his own scions, Paolo and Gabriel, are literally hotfooting their way up the show biz ladder.

Finally, Laurice Guillen and Johnny Delgado are mighty proud of their talented daughters, Ana and Ina. Ana is an outstanding opera and musical theater performer, while Ina recently starred in an audition-calling production of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."

'Virtuosos'

"Virtuosos," the Cultural Center of the Philippines' major fundraising event for 2006, features out-

VIEWFINDER

Nestor
U Torre

standing Filipino pianists performing with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, cellist Renato Lucas and Ballet Philippines.

The pianists featured are Della Gamboa Besa, Ryan Cayabyab, Mary Anne Espina, Rudolf Golez, Anamariz G. de Guzman, Naji Ismail, Manuel Maranba, OSB, Ma. Regina Montecarlos, Peter Portos, Raul Sunico, Nena del Rosario Villanueva and Greg Zuniga.

Program consists of Buczacino's

"Mayon Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra," Bizer's "Carmen Fantasy" Rachmaninoff's "Vocalise," Donizetti's "Les Huguenots" Andante finale from "Lucia di Lammermoor," Pizzolla's "Le Grand Tango," Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C sharp minor," Wagner's Lebested from "Tristan and Isolde," Mozart's Allegro from "Con-

certo in E flat Major for Two Pianos and Orchestra, K. 365, "Salidumey" arranged by Cayabyab and "Kay Ganda ng OPM," and "Rhapsody in Blue" by Gershwin. Monino Duque directs.

Major sponsor is BNP Paribas, the top bank in France and a major supporter of the arts. Call 832-3681 or 891-9999.

"North Country"

The lovely Charlize Theron as a mine? That we've got see. Theron's new film is "North Country" and her portrayal of an iron miner in it must more than pass muster—it's been nominated for a Best Actress Oscar.

Theron plays Josey Aimes, who returns to her hometown after a failed marriage. A single mother of two kids, she turns to the predominant source of employment in the region—the iron mines. She is prepared for the back-breaking and often dangerous work, but coping with the harassment she and other female miners encounter proves far more challenging.

Woody Harrelson, Sissy Spacek and Frances McDormand play other key roles.



KAREL Marquez with mom Pinky

Fearless'

Jet Li's latest film, "Fearless," is his final martial arts movie. The film is about Huo Yuanjia, founder of the wushu martial arts form.

Li likes his new starter because "It expresses my philosophy in life." What will he do next? He enigmatically points out: "Martial arts movies and action films are too separate things. I feel that it's time to close this chapter in my life."

"Fearless" is directed by Ronny Yu, and fight-choreographed by Yen Wo Ping ("Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"; "The Matrix" series).

BRUCE WILLIS MOS DEF DAVID MORSE



NASAANG SI FRANCIS?

"Dead funny."

— CC REYES, Visual Artist

"Ang galing nung cast! Masaya panoorin."

— NIX PUNO, Musician

"Rico Blanco could well be the next heart-throb! Good movie!"

— VICTORIA, College Student

"Super cool. Really funny."

— BING, Student

"Very Pinoy ang humor. Talagang mamamatay ka sa kakatawa."

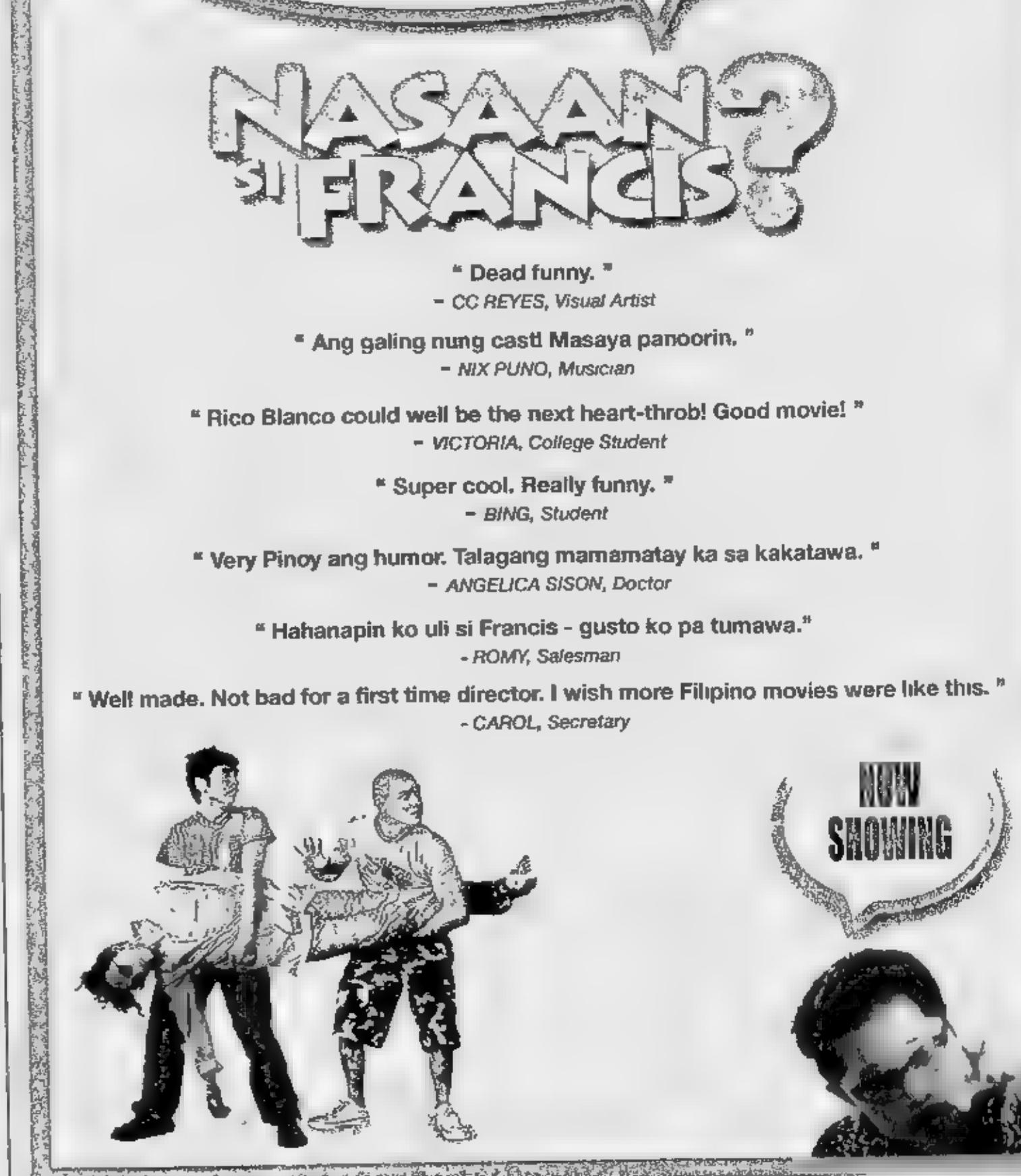
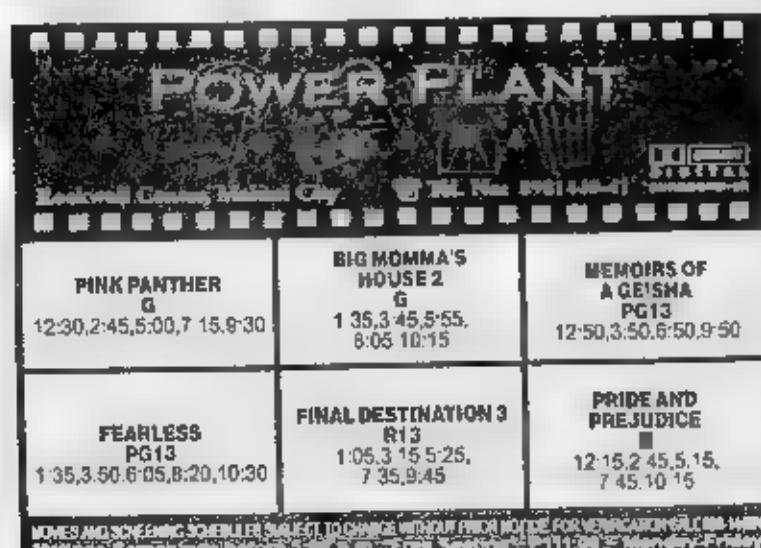
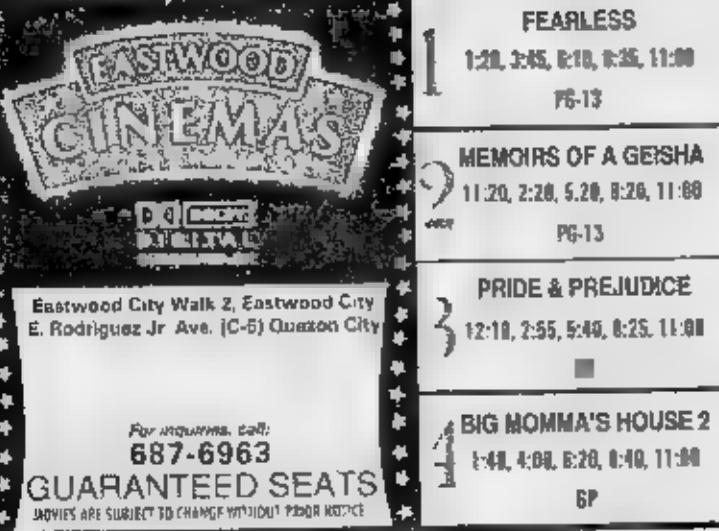
— ANGELICA SISON, Doctor

"Hahanapin ko uli si Francis - gusto ko pa tumawa."

— ROMY, Salesman

"Well made. Not bad for a first time director. I wish more Filipino movies were like this."

— CAROL, Secretary



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10 PINK PANTHER

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6 CLOSE TO YOU

7 MUNICH

6 FIREWALL

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9 NASAAN SI FRANCIS

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Echo and Heart often 'missing in action'

AN ABS-CBN INSIDER TOLD ME THAT "PANDAY Book 2" may no longer push through because lead stars Jericho Rosales and Heart Evangelista are usually "missing in action." Heart's being sickly too often and Echo's non-availability has prompted some "Panday" staff to say in jest, "The hospital where Heart is confined must be somewhere in La Union." It turns out that IJU is where the lovebirds fre-

quently go surfing. Guess Panday followers have to go surfing, too. Channel surfing, that is—since it looks like their fave show's sequel will never air, huh?

Nasty

Someone close to Pauleen Luna told me that Michelle Madrigal has been sending her nasty text messages. When Michelle was con-

DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Ann Carvajal

Insiders say ABS-CBN's 'Panday' sequel may no longer push through

fronted, she denied it. Hmm... sometimes the more you deny, the more you lie. Is this because of jealousy since the two girls happen to have the same ex-bf, JC de Vera? Or could it be out of envy, because Pauleen has more projects? A combination of jealousy and envy turns any girl into a grrrrrr!

Mad Bear

During an out of town taping of "Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita," Bearwin Meily got so mad at the production assistant when she informed him that he had to pay for his room service bill (which was not covered by the production). He reportedly shouted at the PA and told her to take care of it. When co-star Raymart Santiago heard what happened, he offered to pay, out of pity for the hapless PA. Bearwin was probably embarrassed, so he ended up paying... against his will. Wonder how long they can bear with Bearwin?

MTV awards

The fifth annual MTV Asia Awards will be held on May 6 at Siam Paragon, Thailand's brand new state-of-the-art entertainment complex.

Nigel Robbins, president of MTV Networks Asia-Pacific, said: "We are back again in Bangkok with Asia's premier event. MTV Asia Awards pays tribute to top musical talents in the Asia Pacific region. Thailand, with its rich cultural heritage, is the perfect place to host this event."

Viewers can cast their votes for their faves on the official website: www.mtvasia.com

awards.com

My Chemical Romance, reputed for its brilliant, biting and boundary-leaping rock and roll has three nominations. The sensational James "You're Beautiful" Blunt is nominated in two categories. Asian stars Stefanie Sun (Singapore) and Jay Chou (Taiwan) have been nominated for the fifth consecutive year. Wang Lee Hom (Taiwan), Tata Young (Thailand), Asha Bhosle (India), Too Phat (Malaysia) are hot favorites as well. Nominees for Fave Artist from the Philippines are Bamboo, Hale, Kitchie Nadal, Orange and Lemons and Rivermaya.

This year's program is set in a mythical Asian city of the future and employs animation for the first time. Viewers and fans will be able to take part in an epic cyberpunk story of a quest for missing relics that have the power to restore good to a world gone bad.

Miss Fort Ilocandia

Miss Fort Ilocandia, considered a pathway for major beauty pageants, has produced such standouts as Anna Marie Falcon, a.k.a. Francine Prieto, who won in 2003.

Winners of this year's pageant will act as ambassador of goodwill for Fort Ilocandia Resort Hotel in Laog City.

Pre-pageant activities will be held at the Fontana Leisure Parks, Clark Field, Pampanga on March 11. Coronation night will be at Fort Ilocandia on March 18.

New biz show

Tired of watching business shows conducted in incomprehensible jargon? RPN 9 premieres "Magnegoso Tayo" on Friday, March 3 at 6:30 a.m. Hosted by young and bubbly Mr. Fu, the program discusses business ideas, opportunities and trends.

(E-mail: wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com)

FEEDBACK

FROM JIM WALKER (jikopax@earthlink.net), 4231 Belinda St. Simi Valley, CA 93063

Thank you very much for the article on Cheryl Burke. I think she is one of the best dancers I have ever seen. My wife, who used to be in a dance company many years ago, says that no one nabs a routine like Cheryl.

now showing exclusively at glorieta 4 & greenbelt 3
mtrcb rating: restricted 13

WINNER
BEST ACTOR
PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN
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Screen Actors Guild
Broadcast Film Critics Association
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Florida Film Critics Association
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San Diego Film Critics



Philip Seymour Hoffman
capote

Two thumbs way up.
REBET & ROBERT



THURSDAY,
MARCH 2, 2006

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
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BUSINESS

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Peso rallies to 51.38 against the dollar

Traders urged to ignore political noise

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO plans of taking over private firms and businesses should carry on as usual despite the national emergency, according to Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila.

The trade chief called on business leaders to ignore "the heightened political noise."

"(It is still) free market forces that dictate the prices of basic commodities and business firms remain unhampered doing their daily transactions," Favila said.

"The government is mindful of the nation's tenet on free enterprise and that the economy would develop further if nurtured in an environment of a level playing field," he added.

The official challenged businesses to be catalysts in greater economic productivity and beat predictions of an economic downturn.

He said businesses should not go jittery easily due to dissent from different sectors, but rather should look at the opportunities presented by developments during recent days.

On Tuesday, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines called for a periodic assessment of the state of national emergency, hoping that it would be lifted soon to



FAVILA

alleviate concern among investors.

Favila said foreign investors have become reluctant to pour in capital and firms with foreign equity were inclined to put on hold expansion plans because of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017.

In particular, the group expressed concern about a possible shutdown of businesses amid threats that the government could take over private firms such as public utilities.

Favila downplayed these fears, saying businesses should not lose focus on "the real issue," which is to make profitable ventures.

Still, the trade chief said there had been so far no sign that the political unrest had disrupted the normal course of doing business.

"Our field reports from various provinces reported that prices and supply of commodities in the market are stable," he said. "Our international trade is not affected as I have yet to receive a complaint from businessmen that their export shipments from the Philippines are being delayed."

WHAT'S INSIDE

'Texting' seen to boost price monitoring efforts /B3 Peza investments up 27.6% /B6

Highest level in more than 3 years

By Doris C. Dumao

THE PESO YESTERDAY RALLIED TO A NEW THREE-AND-A-HALF-year high of 51.36 before closing at 51.38 against the dollar, ignoring domestic political concerns while riding on bullish regional currency markets.

Market analysts said the political tension that dragged the peso to 52.30 to \$1 on Friday was dissipating and the peso could resume its upward trend to 50, and even further to the 48 level.

The peso opened at 51.48 and hit an intra-day low of 51.545 before closing at 51.38, its highest finish since the 51.30 to a dollar on Aug. 2, 2002. It thus gained another 27 centavos from Tuesday's closing of 51.65. \$1

Volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System surged to \$808.27 million from the previous day's \$621.61 million.

Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Raveas said the next technical barrier at the spot foreign exchange market was at 51.51 to a dollar. "The present move seems to be targeting the 50.40-50.45 levels," he said.

Goldman Sachs analyst Adam Le Mesurier

said the political developments after last weekend's upheaval supported an even more bullish outlook for the peso.

The US investment bank revised its forecast for the peso for the next three months to \$1 from \$2.50 and expected the currency to appreciate further to 49 in six months and to 48 in 12 months versus its original forecast of 52 for the next six to 12 months.

"We believe the noise will remain constant, but the signal/noise ratio is clearly falling, as the macro economy continues to enter a recovery phase," Le Mesurier said.

"The interesting element to the Philippine story is that the government does not appear to resist the pressure for real exchange rate appreciation—the political alignment is in the same direction as fundamentals," he added.

PESO/B2

BIR probes placement firms for tax evasion

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE HAS started investigating the tax compliance of recruitment firms after receiving reports from concerned citizens that many of the recruitment firms had been cheating the government of substantial taxes, he said.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said he has directed tax auditors to check on the income tax returns filed by recruitment firms and compare them with information from third-party sources to see whether the

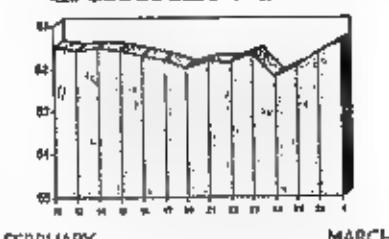
declared incomes were accurate.

The BIR was prompted to make an inquiry into the tax compliance of recruitment firms after receiving reports from concerned citizens that many of the recruitment firms had been cheating the government of substantial taxes, he said.

Quoting government records on overseas deployment, Buñag said the number of Filipinos sent abroad last year rose to 981,337 from only 941,722 the previous year.

The growing number of overseas Filipino workers /BIRLAWERS/B2

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



FEBRUARY MARCH

P 51.38 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., March 1, 2006

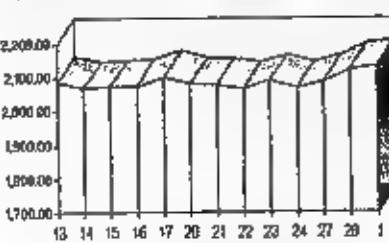
¥ 115.84 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., March 1, 2006

GOLD: \$554.60-555.10

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 28, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.58-percent higher after President Macapagal-Arroyo said she would give up emergency powers at the earliest possible time, helping to ease political concerns, dealers said.

The composite index added 12.31 points at 2,135.27, its highest level in a month. It traded between 2,122.96 and 2,138.33. Wednesday's close is the index's highest finish since Feb. 3 when it closed at 2,138.71.

The broader all-shares index however, retreated 4.36 points to 1,024.33 SHARES/B2

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Like this first 1000 m to reach
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Banco de horror

NOT MANY OF US KNOW THAT the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy already used the "M" word to raise a lot of money abroad—about P6 billion.

That "M" is the touchy "merger" which Tessie Sy, daughter of Henry Sy, wants to do between the SM-owned Banco de Oro (BDO) and Equitable PCI Bank (EPCIB).

The "merger" is the Sy family's way of taking over EPCIB without them spending a centavo, since they only need the "cooperation" of the SSS and the GSIS.

Those pension funds invested P20 billion of their members' money in EPCIB. Luckily for the members, the GSIS is not dancing with Tessie Sy.

And so it seems Tessie Sy is having a hard time pushing for it, despite the reported help of two

BREAKTIME



Conrado R.
Banal III

"godfathers" who are close (even "related") to this cute administration of Gloria Arroyo.

Still, even before the merger can happen, the SM group used it to sell abroad so-called global depository receipts, or GDRs, worth about P6 billion.

The Australia-based investment bank Macquarie handled the issuance, but our info is, somebody high in BDO used the "M" word during the roadshow.

Whether such a tactic helped Macquarie in selling the SM

group's GDRs is hard to say at this point. It only tells us that the SM group really craves for EPCIB.

SO there you are: The SM group, at some point, was quite certain of accomplishing the merger, even daring to use it as the come-on to get other people's money abroad.

And the group almost did, actually, except that GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia, a Cebu hometown boy, dared to fight Tessie Sy, named by Fortune magazine as one of the 50 most powerful women in the world.

This month, GSIS is to hold a bidding for its 12-percent interest in EPCIB, plus maybe the controversial 10 percent in "treasury shares."

If those shares slip out of the hands of Tessie Sy, she will have a hard time in effecting the merger. The buyer—whatever he is—will never agree with the takeover thinly disguised as merger.

At the moment, Tessie Sy only enjoys the "cooperation" of the other pension fund, the SSS, through its boss Cora dela Paz.

Together, in fact, the SM group and the SSS recently elected dela Paz chair of the EPCIB board.

The accountant dela Paz even announced that she was the right woman for the job, since the bank will implement the "international accounting standard."

By the way, the United States rejected it. And so EPCIB wants to do something that everybody in the US will not do.

NOW dela Paz is the same SSS boss who looked the other way when EPCIB gave away P100 million as retirement pay to its former chair and president.

That was right after the Sy family bought out the Go family in EPCIB last year. Was the P100 million retirement package part of the deal? It's hard to say.

Still, as the "right woman for the job," dela Paz should have questioned it. She owed it to the millions of SSS members who contribute hard-earned money to the SSS.

From what I gathered, a good part of the "retirement package" was already spent for PR, legal

expenses, and "retainers" even before it was awarded.

Incidentally, a big law firm is readying a libel suit against the INQUIRER, allegedly for reporting and commenting on EPCIB deals—some eight months ago.

And they are suing only now, just as Tessie Sy got frustrated over the merger. I mean, does the timing suck or what?

WHETHER the lawyers like it or not, the "merger" is nothing but a hostile takeover designed to ease the SSS and the GSIS out of the bank.

And if you were dela Paz, who has danced, is dancing and will likely dance with Tessie Sy for a long time, how do you explain it to SSS members?

The SSS and the GSIS put in P20 billion in the bank. That's double the outlay of the Sy family at about P10 billion. And dela Paz allows the SM group to control the bank.

Horror of horrors, the BDO people have complete control of EPCIB. The chair of the executive committee is Tessie Sy, who was chair of BDO. The chair of the credit committee is Josefina Tan, former executive of BDO. SM group nominee to the EPCIB board, Exequiel Villacorta Jr., who chairs EPCIB Investment, which keeps the 10-percent "treasury shares," is a former president of BDO. Jess Tirona, head of the LGU fund, an "independent" director of EPCIB, was the first president of BDO, when it was still a savings bank.

They are in control of the very same bank that the SM group wanted to gobble up by diluting the SSS and the GSIS and the public investors.

That, in other countries, is a NO-NO! You can never tell what trade secrets such a group can steal from the bank, for instance. You don't allow a competitor inside your house, not even just in the garage. In this case, the SM group does not just go straight to the kitchen. It is even in charge.

And dela Paz decides always to side with the group? Hmmm.

Again, the SSS and the GSIS have some P20 billion sink in the bank. And yet SM group has complete control of the bank.

Peso rallies to 51.38 against the dollar

From page B1

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters at the sidelines of a luncheon hosted by AB Capital that the sharp appreciation was market-driven and did not require any intervention from the BSE.

"The movement of the peso last Friday was a knee-jerk reaction to developments at that time. The market has corrected and has been correcting since Monday," Tetangco said.

Malacanang declared a state of national emergency on Friday to thwart coup threats while political tension escalated Sunday when the commandant of the Philippine Marines was relieved.

"The improvement is due to a number of factors, number one would be the continuation of foreign exchange inflows. We have seen portfolio inflows come in, so this is consistent with what's happening in the stock market where the index has also improved. Part of the inflows have gone to the government securities market and some portion to the money market," Tetangco said.

"At the same time, we've seen

exporter dollar sales and also overseas Filipino workers' remittances. On the outflow side, there's very moderate corporate demand," the BSP chief said.

In early morning trade yesterday, Tetangco said the strengthening of Asian currencies against the US dollar was a key factor that boosted the peso.

Asked whether the peso would appreciate further, Tetangco reiterated that it would depend on the inflow of foreign exchange as well as the performance of regional markets versus the US dollar.

"For this year, we're projecting a BOP (balance-of-payments) surplus and with this, I think there's reason to expect further support for the peso," Tetangco said.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

"If Asian currencies strengthen versus the US dollar, that will also provide support. I think what's important is (to make) the market believe that the economic reform agenda is going to be sustained," he said.

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tained," he said.

BIR probes . . .

From page B1

workers was also reflected in the significant increase in dollar remittances last year. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas earlier reported that OPW sent an all-time high of \$10.7 billion last year, or 25 percent higher than the previous year's.

An increase in the number of overseas employment contracts should mean higher incomes for recruitment firms, and therefore higher income tax collection by the BIR.

But Buñag said initial indications from the ongoing tax-compliance inquiry showed that the increase in the number of deployments was not commensurate with the recruitment firms' tax remittances.

He declined to give specific

amounts of unremitted taxes, saying the BIR was still in the process of computing.

"Let me warn erring placement agencies, whether they be deploying land-based or sea-based workers, that the BIR is vigorously pursuing tax evasion cases against tax cheats, no matter what sector they belong to," he said.

The BIR, which accounts for about 60 percent of the national government's revenues, is hard-pressed to carry out a strong anti-tax evasion campaign following the huge revenue shortfall it incurred last year.

Tax leakages arising from both tax evasion and inefficiencies in tax collections were estimated at P100 billion a year.

The BIR collected only P534.5 billion last year, falling short of its P546.9-billion target.

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No eye has seen. No ear has heard. No mind conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.

1 Corinthians 2:9

Evangelina Ramos-Robles

has peacefully joined the Lord and her husband Jose La Rosa Robles on February 26, 2006 at the age of 83.

Her loving children Roland, Lulu and Wesley; daughter-in-law Evelyn, grandchild Angela, sister Luz, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her mortal remains lie at the Nacional Memorial Homes, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 4, 2006 at Himlayang Pilipino, Quezon City after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

JORGE VELASQUEZ BUAN

of Arayat, Pampanga

Now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord. He peacefully joined our Creator on February 28, 2006 at the age of 72.

His loving wife Natividad, children Bong and Cecille, Alex & Alice, Beck & Yeng, Dhay & Sandy, Ana Marie (†), Jojo & Bing, Astrid, Lea & Wilbur and grandchildren, request the relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies at San Jose (Mesulo), Arayat, Pampanga.

Interment will take place on Saturday, March 4, 2006, at Arayat Catholic Cemetery after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Child Neurology & Neurosurgery course set March 2-3

THE UP-PGH FACULTY AND ALUMNI OF THE Neurosciences headed by Dr. Leonor Cabral-Um, in cooperation with the PGH Department of Neurosciences chaired by Dr. Willy Lopez, is organizing its 4th Post Graduate Course, "Neurology in Your Practice: Focus on Child Neurology and Neurosurgery" on March 2-3 at the ballroom of the Pan Pacific Hotel, M. Adriatic St., Manila. Open to all adult and pediatric neurologists, neurosurgeons, pediatricians, family physicians and residents in training, the course's program includes clinical neurology guidelines in traumatic surgery, TB meningitis, cerebral palsy, childhood migraines, special needs of the hyperactive child, movement disorders, febrile seizures and diagnosis and management of brain and spinal tumors in children. Also included in the course are lectures by Drs. Lillian Lee, Myrna Rojas, Marissa Lukban, Marilyn Ortiz and Benilda Sanchez for Pediatric Neurosurgery, and Drs. Gap Legaspi, Eric Legaspi, Ibet Sih, Jose Aguilar for Neurosurgery, workshops on pediatric neurological examination (Dr. Martha Lu-Bolanos), developmental screening (Dr. Alexs Reyes), botulinum toxin injection for spasticity (Dr. Myrna Rojas) and neurosurgery video clinics (Dr. Annabelle Chua). Interested parties may contact Ms. Nanci Escolas, tel nos. 525-4996/0916-3681519 or Department of Neurosciences, PGH 521-8450 local 7405.

SANYO DENKI PHILIPPINES INC.

JOB VACANCIES

We are a manufacturing firm at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines. We need the following senior managers to manage and attend to the needs of our production and assembly lines for our FAN MOTORS, UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY AND SERVO MOTORS.

PRODUCTION DEPUTY DIVISION MANAGER

Must have at least 10 years of extensive experience in a manufacturing firm and has a comprehensive knowledge in the production of Fan Motors, Uninterruptible Power Supply and Servo Motors. The job encompasses not only production phase but also the entire processes as well, including quality assurance of finished products and raw materials, purchasing system for production requirements, and, Planning and Process Control. The incumbent must also be knowledgeable in the operation of different production machines and familiar with its maintenance as well.

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT MANAGER

Must have at least 5 years of comprehensive experience in all processes for the production of Servo Motors. The incumbent must also be knowledgeable in planning and process control for servo motor systems using EZUMI production control software. Successful applicant shall also assume the duties and responsibilities of a Production Control Department in charge in the planning and control for production of Servo Motors.

PRODUCTION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT MANAGER

Must have at least 5 years extensive work experience in Production Engineering, Facilities Maintenance and Management Information Systems. We expect applicants to have at least a working knowledge of an industrial Robotic course. The work experience should be in the field of maintaining production machines / equipments / facilities including building maintenance; and, computer hardware and software. The bulk of the duties and responsibilities of this Manager is in the repair and maintenance of all the machines and equipments that are being used in the production of fan motors, uninterrupted power supply and servo motors.

All applicants for the above positions should be able to read, write and speak English.

Interested applicants should send their resume with 2X2 picture and credentials to:

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BLDG. 225, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority
Subic Bay, Freeport Zone

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BASILIO C. CALANGI

Ex-Mayor - Mabini, Batangas
(Served for 18 years as Mayor)

Born - May 23, 1917

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 23, 2006

Interment will be on Saturday, March 4, 2006, 12:00 noon at Mabini Catholic Cemetery, Mabini, Batangas

Message of Thanks
We, the family of the late

RAMONA GUECO CONCEPCION
"MONANG"

who passed away on 22 February 2006, wish to thank all those who offered prayers and masses, sent flowers, extended assistance, financial assistance and condole with us during a most trying moment.

MORE CLASSIFIED ADS
ON PAGES A2, A13,
A14, A15, B2 & B3

CLASSIFIEDS

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Privatization and Management Office ("PMO"), through its Bids and Awards Committee ("BAC"), intends to procure the services of a financial advisor ("FA") in connection with the privatization of the shares of stock of Al Amanah Islamic Investment Bank of the Philippines (AAIIPB) under a success fee arrangement.

The Approved Budget for the Contract ("ABC") is FOUR MILLION PESOS (P4M), to be paid by the PMO and chargeable against the success fee which shall not exceed two percent (2%) of the total sales proceeds from the privatization of the shares of AAIIPB.

The fees for the FA shall be payable as follows:

| PHASE | DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES | FEES |
|---------------------|---|---|
| I - Valuation | Preparation of valuation report, appraisal, information memorandum and privatization plan | Not to exceed Four Million Pesos (P4M) |
| II - Implementation | Implementation plan, as approved by the Privatization Council | Not to exceed 2% of the total sales proceeds, less the fixed fee paid for the Valuation Phase |

2. The PMO now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent ("LOIs") from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for Financial Advisory Services. Interested FAs must submit their LOIs on or before 6 March 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., by hand, to BAC, Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City and secure the Eligibility Documents and Shortlisting Requirements therefrom for a minimal fee of P5,000.00.

Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents and Short Listing Requirements shall be on the date of the Opening of Eligibility Documents on 10 March 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Only those found eligible shall be considered for short listing and only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.

3. The PMO-BAC shall draw up the short list of FAs from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 ("RA 9184") and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A ("IRR-A"). The short list of prospective bidders shall not exceed five (5) FAs. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:

a. 30% - General experience of the FA, considering both the overall experience of the firm and the individual experience of the principal and key staff, including relevant experience of the principal and key staff from previous employment and privatization experience.

b. 30% - Experience of the FA in Banking and Financial Institution;

c. 20% - Qualifications of personnel who may be assigned to the project;

d. 10% - Dealings of the FA with the GRP;

e. 10% - Experience in Islamic Banking.

The passing rate to be short listed is 70%.

4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of RA 9184. In accordance with IRR-A of RA 9184, only bids from short listed FAs will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents to be obtained from the PMO. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during postqualification.

The PMO-BAC shall evaluate bids using the Quality-Cost Based Evaluation procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders to be obtained from the PMO.

5. Interested FAs may obtain the eligibility and short listing requirements, and the other bidding documents, from the PMO-BAC at the address given below from Mondays to Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The deadline for submission of bids from the short listed FAs shall be on 3 April 2006, 10:00 a.m.

6. The PMO/BMO-BAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any formality in the bid requirements, declare the bidding a failure, annul the bidding process, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and award the contract to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Government.

THE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

4th Floor, 104 Gamboa Street,

Legaspi Village, Makati City

Tel Nos. 893-1640 / 893-7096 / 817-1103

Fax No. 893-2290

Website: www.pmo.gov.ph

(Sgd.) CRISANTA S. LEGASPI
Deputy Privatization Officer and
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PTD-Feb. 24 & March 2, 2006

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People, Events & Products

GlobeSolutions, GlobeQUEST present roster of services

GLOBE TELECOM AND INNOVE Communications recently convened top companies in the manufacturing and pharmaceutical industries on two separate occasions for a preview of their comprehensive suite of business communication and data solutions. The likes of Unilever, Cemex, Philip Morris, Integrated Microelectronics, Johnson & Johnson, and SAFI & Heinz-UFC were represented among other leading food, non-food and semiconductors as well as electronics companies during the forum for manufacturing companies, while notable industry names such as Unilab, GiaxSmithKline, Eli-Lilly, Abbott Laboratories, Merck Sharp and Dohme, UCB Philippines, Intermed, Cathay Drug and AstraZeneca were on hand during the forum for pharmaceutical companies.

The head of Globe's enterprise business group, Gil Genio, welcomed the attendees and reaffirmed the power of communications technology as a potent business tool. He stressed that the integrated voice and data solutions offered by GlobeSolutions and GlobeQUEST are easily adaptable to the particular needs of these industries and can effectively be used in many ways to improve productivity.

Solutions manager Paolo Cesar Lacuna introduced GlobeSolutions' line-up of value-added products and services. He discussed the possibilities opened up by enterprise messaging platforms such as TxtConnect and Tracker Corporate Edition, email mobility solutions like MobileMail and BlackBerry, and the total voice and data solution Visibility, which allows seamless connectivity anytime, anywhere. Lacuna further explained how these

services can be successfully integrated into every step of the manufacturing and pharmaceutical value chains – from marketing and sales to customer service, logistics, and human resource management.

On the corporate wireline services end, GlobeQUEST segment manager Ryan Pangilinan presented products and services designed to enable businesses to easily and securely communicate over the different managed networks. These services include: GlobeQUEST Internet Exchange (GIX) – a broadband Internet network with one of the biggest IP port capacities in the country, Freeway IP and IPL networks – managed networks from the Philippines to the US, GlobeQUEST C2W (Cebu to the World) – a managed network service linking Cebu directly to the US without having to pass through an international gateway in Manila, and Broadband Access Service (BAX) – the first in the Philippines to offer a high-speed fiber optic network. Pangilinan also demonstrated how these services enable the manufacturing and pharmaceutical industries to efficiently accomplish their day-to-day operations and boost their business bottom-line.

To give the guests a clearer background on these services, business cases were also discussed in both events – Cemex for the manufacturing companies and Unilab for the pharmaceutical firms. Cement company Cemex implements several GlobeSolutions' value-added services – TxtConnect, BlackBerry, Mobile Mail, Visibility, Tracker CE and SFA – and uses GlobeQUEST services to connect its Philippine offices and maintain a reliable link to the head office in Mexico and to 50 other coun-

tries. These have contributed immensely to their continued leadership in the building solutions industry. Meanwhile, Unilab, which has been a valued Globe client for many years now, has successfully applied GlobeSolutions and GlobeQUEST services in almost every aspect of their business, enabling them to improve their company's overall performance. They are also looking to expand and strengthen their collaboration with Globe by availing of new services such as the Corporate Ringback Tone, which allows sales personnel to market their brand in a unique and personal way by using it as their phone's ringback tone.

The presentations received positive feedback from the guests, many of whom expressed interest in GlobeSolutions' and GlobeQUEST's business communication and data access solutions. Existing clients of Globe who attended the forums affirmed that the ability to offer a comprehensive package of products and services with applications tailored to their needs has always been the main strength of the company's corporate services arm. Several of these companies have recently renewed or expanded their partnership with Globe for the provision of wireless, wireline, and data solutions and value-added services.

GlobeSolutions provides effective and efficient communication services to address various business needs. For more information, e-mail globe@b2b.com.ph or call the GlobeSolutions hotline at 730-1999. On the other hand, for inquiries about GlobeQUEST services, call the GlobeQUEST hotline at 79-QUEST or e-mail marketing@globequest.com.ph.



HYUNDAI, KIA PROVIDE AID TO LANDSLIDE VICTIMS

Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo accepted, in behalf of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the amount of \$200,000 for a total of P10,000,000, donated by the Hyundai-Kia Automotive Group, the largest car manufacturing group in Korea, at official ceremonies Feb. 23, at the Office of the President of the Republic of the Philippines in Malacanang Palace. At the turnover ceremony were (from left) General Glen Rabonza, Executive Director of the National Disaster Coordi-

ning Council; Richard Lee, chair Hyundai Asia Resources Inc.; Maria Fe Perez-Aguado, EVP and chief operating officer, Hyundai Asia Resources Inc.; Il-sung Seo, general manager and chief of Asia Regional Headquarters, Hyundai Motor Company; President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; Moon Je Ho, director for regional HQ, Asia and Pacific, Kia Motors; Felix Mabilog, president, Columbian Autocar Corp.; and Jeremy Lee, manager, Asia regional headquarters of Hyundai Motor Company.

BIGGEST MALL TO RISE IN ILOCANDIA

Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle, who was in the country recently to

commemorate the centennial of Filipino immigration to Hawaii, took part in the ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony of the Center a 20-hectare mixed-use development that will soon rise in Metro Laog, located in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte.

The first of its kind in

the entire province of Ilocos, the commercial and tourism development center will comprise of the following facilities: a shopping mall with supermarket, four theaters, retail stores, a US franchise 50-room boutique hotel, at least two commercial buildings, a transport terminal, a 24-hour full-service gasoline station with its own retail stores and fast food; and a 20,000-sqm strip mall for bars,



restaurants and all-day dining places. For inquiries, call 636-4392 or 634-4906. Lingle was treated to a warm welcome by (from left) San Nicolas Mayor Alfredo Valdez Jr., Laog City Mayor Michael Farinas, lawyer Hilario P. Valdez, chair Vinali Development Corp., developer of The Center, visiting friend Linda Ramos, and the Valdez patriarch Alfredo Valdez.

VANNA GARCIA ENDORSES BOARDWALK

Boardwalk, a Filipino owned corporation that engages in the distribution and networking business of footwear apparel, belts, bags and other fashion accessories, announces the renewal of Vanna Garcia as model/endorser for Boardwalk's young adult collection. Vanna Garcia aptly reflects the youth of today. She's independent, free-spirited and yet she retains her homegrown values that's why she was chosen as Boardwalk's endorser. As shown in the photo are Lorena Garcia (Vanna's mother); Vanna



Garcia, Boardwalk image model; Bea Orange, events officer, BBN; Marc Javier, BBD-operations development head, BBN; Marlon Erena, sales division, BBN and Angel Lumban, executive assistant.

Ayala Land Premier penetrates Hong Kong market

AYALA LAND RECENTLY ACHIEVED A MAJOR breakthrough in the Asian real estate market by entering the Hong Kong market through its high-end residential project brand, Ayala Land Premier. Hong Kong, renowned globally for its conservative yet sophisticated consumer tastes, welcomed the entry of One Serendra, Ayala Land Premier's garden residential condominium with the unique proportion of 65 percent greenery and spacious, luxurious units. A showcase of the top-notch development was held late last year at the posh Conrad Hotel in Pacific Place, Queen'sway.

These events took advantage of the growing trend in the Hong Kong real-estate industry where property exhibitions are frequently held in various top hotels on weekends. "In Hong Kong, hotels would be venues for people to get to know their options in the real estate market," says Jim Ramsay, sales director of Wealth Space Consultants, the partner broker firm of Ayala Land Premier tasked to market One Serendra in Hong Kong. "These people know what they want, and they're very discriminating in the sense that they would listen intently to what you have to offer, and ask very intelligent questions after."

The initial wave of exhibition was met with great interest from Hong Kong families and businessmen looking at halfway homes for travel or real-estate investment, proof that One Serendra is at par with international standards. Prospective unit owners were introduced to world-class suburban community at the heart of Bonifacio Global City, the Philippines' fastest growing business and commercial hub near the renowned and established Makati Central Business District. Among One Serendra's highlights are tree-lined parks, tranquil gardens, spacious curvilinear units, a unique international shopping haven, and recreational facilities of first-class country club standards.

"One Serendra is ideal for people who are looking for a place that's calm and free from disturbance, yet accessible to all the conveniences found in the city," affirms Ramsay. "It's also very luxurious, with generously sized units. It's familiar and comforting to travelers who are used to world-class surroundings."

Known for superior quality developments that serve the discriminating high-end market, Ayala Land Premier's first step in penetrating Hong Kong came through the recommendation of Hong Kong-based Filipino Lucas Abucay Jr. Mr. Abucay was very pleased with his own Ayala Land Premier property and impressed with the promise of world-class suburban living. As Chief Financial Officer of one of the territory's leading real-estate developers, he convinced a former agent to form Wealth Space Consultants as a dedicated sales force to push Serendra to international clientele.

Further plans to strengthen the Ayala Land Premier network in Hong Kong include talks with Filipino organizations and banks operating in the island to target overseas Filipinos, Hong Kong and other foreign nationals who are keen to invest in the Philippines, and a dedicated and more permanent One Serendra showroom at the Elizabeth House in Causeway Bay.



BJ 'TOLITS' FORBES GOES WITH LEONE KIDS

The government's junior ambassador of the Bright Child Program movie/TV child star BJ 'Tolits' Forbes, very recently signed with Star Paper Corp. to endorse their Leone Kids brand of pencil and crayons. The Leone Kids brand is fast gaining wide acceptance and loyalty of parents and schoolchildren nationwide because of its premium quality without the premium price. Shown in photo, seated from left, are Baling Decena, BJ's talent manager; Annie Forbes, BJ's mother; BJ 'Tolits'

Winners of 2nd BPI-DOST Project of the Year Awards announced

THE BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS (BPI) in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) recently announced the winners of the second BPI-DOST Science "Best Project of the Year".

Twelve semi-finalists were chosen from the twenty-nine projects of the 2006 BPI-DOST Science Awardees from 10 universities nationwide. The list was narrowed down to six finalists by BPI-DOST officials. The six finalists presented their research projects before a joint BPI-DOST panel of experts. The six finalists and their respective research projects are as follows:

Cherry's Abrigo from the University of the Philippines, Los Baños – "Evaluation of Oxidant Formation and Ammonia Destruction in Alkalinity-Supplemented Simulated Seawater in a Batch Electrolytic Reactor"; Danve M. Castroverde from University of the Philippines, Diliman – "Molecular Studies on Type Strains Vibrio Campbelli Vibrio Harvey, using Polymerase Chain Reaction and Electroporation"; David P. Peralta from Ateneo de Manila University – "Isolation, Purification and Characterization of a 25-35kDa B-glycosidase from Native Ginger Rhizome (Zingiber officinale Roscoe)"; Maydeline P. Que from University of

the Philippines, Diliman – "Portable Logging Apnea Monitor"; Leni A. Soera from the University of San Carlos – "Bioactivity of two cultured marine sponges Callyspongia serisoka and Cibrochalanis emenda (Pfrimer Demo spongae)"; and Varsolo C. Sunio from Ateneo de Manila University – "Holographic Storage and Animation Based on Phase Multiplexing with Self-Assembled Elastomer Phase Mask".

The announcement of the winners and the awards ceremony followed immediately after the presentation. For the "Best Project of the Year" Award, the winner is Christian

Danve M. Castroverde, 1st runner up is Maydeline P. Que, and 2nd runner up is David P. Peralta.

For the past 17 years, BPI has been honoring three students from leading universities and colleges with the BPI Science Awards, for their exceptional achievements in their respective science or technology field. The awards are chosen on the basis of their research projects, academic performance and leadership qualities. To date 460 students have been given recognition for their contributions to the industry and nation-building.

International Cultural Studies and Education Corp. (ICSEC-Kaplan), a Kaplan Certified Education Provider of Kaplan Test Prep International Inc. (www.kaplan.com) the world leader in Test Preparation for over 60 years, and Berlitz Language Center (www.berlitz.com), which for over 125 years has been teaching English and other languages to millions of people across the globe, have recently signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) making the ICSEC-Kaplan Educational Centers located nationwide (QC, Manila, Makati, Cebu, Iloilo, Baguio, Davao and Legazpi) official satellite centers for offering the Berlitz language learning programs. Present

during the MOA signing were (from left, standing) Fortune De Lara (language center director, Berlitz Phils), Stewart Fenix (program consultant, Berlitz Phils), Joy Gatmaytan (academic director, ICSEC-Kaplan), Ma. Aurora Diaz (CIOO director, ICSEC-Kaplan), Erwin Gatchalian (business development director, ICSEC-Kaplan) and (from left, seated) Dr. Alfred Tong (partner, Berlitz Phils), Nobuhiko Eto (franchise manager, Asia/Berlitz Int'l.), Wilson Go (president, Berlitz Phils), George U. Lim (CEO, ICSEC-Kaplan), Catherine Lee-Lim (EVP-operations, ICSEC-Kaplan) and Edgar Corba (executive assistant to the CEO, ICSEC-Kaplan).

During the MOA signing were (from left, standing) Fortune De Lara (language center director, Berlitz Phils), Stewart Fenix (program consultant, Berlitz Phils), Joy Gatmaytan (academic director, ICSEC-Kaplan), Ma. Aurora Diaz (CIOO director, ICSEC-Kaplan), Erwin Gatchalian (business development director, ICSEC-Kaplan) and (from left, seated) Dr. Alfred Tong (partner, Berlitz Phils), Nobuhiko Eto (franchise manager, Asia/Berlitz Int'l.), Wilson Go (president, Berlitz Phils), George U. Lim (CEO, ICSEC-Kaplan), Catherine Lee-Lim (EVP-operations, ICSEC-Kaplan) and Edgar Corba (executive assistant to the CEO, ICSEC-Kaplan).

BUSINESS

Peza investments up 27.6%

Of the 71 projects listed as of end-February, 15 are in IT

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ented projects registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority surged 27.6 percent to

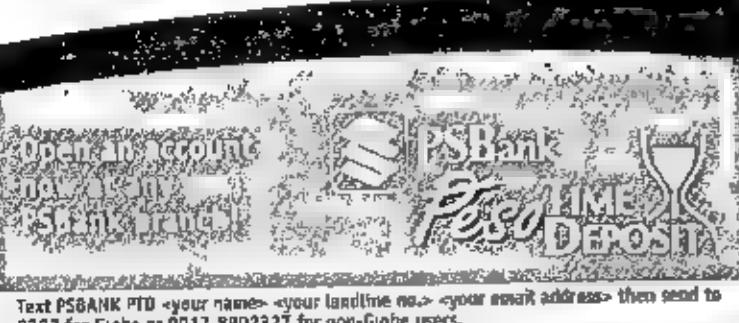
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| 1.0MM - 4.99MM | 6.000 | 6.125 | 6.250 |
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P8.4 billion in the first two months, the agency reported yesterday.

In the first two months of 2006, locators committed to invest a total of P4.15 billion in 61 projects, while ecozone developers earmarked some P4.3 billion in 10 projects.

Some of the biggest projects include those of economic zone developer Jovima Management and Development—the operation and maintenance of a P115.2-million, seven-story building and a P79.7-million, four-story building.

Also approved during the period were a P34.7-million back office transaction processing operation, a P32-million manufacturing facility for protective tapes and films for liquid crystal displays, and a P24.6-million contact call center.

Peza declined, however, to give further details.

Peza Director General Lilia de Luma said there were 71 projects listed by the end of February, almost double the 37 projects regis-

tered in the same period in 2005.

Of the investments committed as of end-February, some P371 million represented 15 information technology projects.

IT investments increased 32 percent from the four projects worth P281 million registered last year.

In the IT sector alone, new jobs generated were expected to reach 8,591 or 693 percent higher than the 1,083 jobs last year.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Pavila had announced that projects approved by Peza and the Board of Investments reached a total of P231 billion last year or about 24 percent higher than the P186.3 billion posted in 2004.

Last year's top projects in terms of cost were those of PNOC Petrochemical Development Corp.'s naphtha cracker at P34.8 billion, JG Summit Petrochemical Corp.'s (also a naphtha cracker) at P26.2 billion, Cebu Air Inc.'s refueling at P21.2 billion and Kepco Cebu Corp.'s power project at P15.2 billion.

A source from the DBCC said the peso-dollar exchange rate was one of the targets that might be adjusted to factor in recent developments.

The DBCC was also looking at revising its inflation target to

Gov't more optimistic on peso vs US dollar

By Michelle V. Remo

7.3-8 percent from the original 8-8.5 percent, as suggested by the BSP.

Some of the macroeconomic targets were set back in 2004 when the government was crafting the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 2005 to 2010.

The BSP proposed the revision in the peso target range to 51 to 53, on grounds that dollar inflows from overseas Filipino workers continued to rise.

The BSP had reported that OFW remittances last year reached an all-time high of \$10.7 billion, climbing 25 percent from the previous year's figure.

The increase in remittances was partly due to the growing number of Filipinos going abroad.

The increase in dollar inflows from OFWs helped boost the country's gross international reserves to historic highs.

As of January this year, the GIR shot up to its highest level of \$20.5 billion.

War over TV slot heats up

By Daxim L. Lucas

GMA NETWORK INC. yesterday reiterated its claim over one of SKY Cable's most-watched channel slots, saying the existing channel assignment for its recently launched QTV 11 station was fraught with technical problems.

The move—opposed by SKY Cable—puts at stake the channel 27 slot, which has long been occupied by the ABS-CBN News Channel, which, like SKY Cable, is owned by the Lopez family.

In a telephone interview, GMA's chief operating officer Gilberto Duavit said the network has already submitted its position to the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), which is expected to release its final ruling in the coming days.

In a statement, GMA pointed out that the existing slot used to broadcast its QTV 11 unit over cable television had technical problems that result in poor picture quality, including the occasional wavy lines.

Because of this, GMA wants its QTV 11 signal broadcast on another slot, and has specifically requested the Channel 27 slot.

GMA used to broadcast programs for its LHF on Channel 27—a “free to air” channel—until 2001 when it ceased operations due to cost cutting efforts.

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LIFE *Style*

Food writers

Raymond Sokolov and Alan Davidson, even humorist Calvin Trillin, have given Pinoy food delicious reviews

HALO-HALO is one way to describe Filipino cooking, both refreshing and a mixture of so many influences.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GLENDA BARRETO'S "FLAVORS OF THE PHILIPPINES"

Overseas Filipino wonders: 'halo-halo, sinigang, ukoy'

WHEN ASKED WHY FILIPINO FOOD HAS not broken into the international scene, I usually take a second or two to gather my thoughts before disputing the statement.

Shall I quote famous food writers who say our food is so varied and we eat with so much joy? Shall I talk about people like Glenda Barreto who have made Filipino food such a hit abroad? Shall I point out that, with so many Filipino workers around the world, how can our food not be known?

The famous food writers I constantly meet at work, in my little library of food books, provide me lessons on how to write, and thrill me as well with their conclusions on how good our food is—as good as, maybe even better than, other cuisine.

One of these writers is Raymond Sokolov, author of several food books and once the editor of The Wall Street Journal's Leisure and Arts. He came here to do research on "Why We Eat What We Eat" (Summit Books, 1991), a study of how the encounter between New and Old Worlds changed food cultures.

Wonderful

Before he came, people who used to live and work here, presumably expatriates, told him there was nothing good to eat in the country. He ended up marveling at so many wonders of our cooking, especially our indigenous food, some of them disguised by Spanish names—*adobo*, *tamales*, *paella*.

But it was *sinigang* which impressed him. He wrote this paragraph, revealing his high regard for our cooking: "Filipinos do not seem to be much attracted by the extreme flavors and extreme seasonings... They have their own standards, quite wonderfully intricate. But you will miss the point if you are not willing to compare in your mind 20 theoretical ways of making fish taste sour. Into such a mental/sensual framework, the whole of world cuisine can fit and end up Filipino."

Alan Davidson, in his collection of food essays, "A Kipper with My Tea" (Macmillan, 1990), had a chapter on the Filipino food scene which included the variety of cookery books and his amazement at the joy we exuded when we ate.

He wrote that "Filipino food is good, but its perceived merit is increased by a large factor because of this tropical-rejoicing syndrome." For this editor of "The Oxford Companion to Food," that quality was as refreshing as our "mix-mix" of cooked fruits and shaved ice, which was why he called that chapter "Halo-Halo."

Calvin Trillin would still be my favorite food writer even if he never wrote anything about our cuisine. But he did. It's not a treatise like Sokolov's book and he did not come here to taste our food like Davidson. But, living in New York City, he gets his Filipino food fix.

In "New Grub Streets" (Feeding a Yen, Random House 2003), he mentions Filipino barbecue as one of many ethnic foods he can get on Roosevelt Avenue.

Trillin mentions barbecue again and "fried rice and lo mein and egg rolls and an unusual fritter that was made with vegetables and fried in oil" in "Confessions of a Stand-up Sausage Eater" (Third Helpings, Ticknor and Fields, 1983).

It's not difficult to recognize *sinigang*, *pancit*, *ukoy* and *lumpia* from his descriptions. Trillin confesses to "certain fondness for" *ukoy*, one reason he doesn't mind having non-Asian food booths at an Italian feast.

What puzzles him is why there are so many Filipino food booths, 10 on every block, at

food fairs, whether Italian or even Armenian. He considers this "one of those New York ethnic mysteries that outlanders were not meant to understand."

Not even Filipinos who manage those stalls could tell him the reason. For me, it's the Sidcot, Legazpi and Salcedo weekend market syndrome.

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BOIL pork belly in water with salt, peppercorn and garlic until skin can be pinched easily. Remove from fire and drain, cool and air dry. Deep-fry in a deep saucepan until tiny blisters appear on the skin, chop into small pieces. Set aside.



COMBINE all the ingredients of Pico de Gallo in a bowl, cover and chill.



MIX the meat and Pico de Gallo mixture.



WRAP mixture in soft tortilla. Serve with tortilla chips.

Quick, filling snack

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

YOU WANT A QUICK DELICIOUS snack? A popular Mexican snack, with slices of succulent pork mixed with salsa and wrapped in freshly toasted soft tortilla, will tide you over until lunch or dinner.

Tacos de Carnitas are a favorite snack in Mexico. Carnitas means "little meats."

This recipe uses pork that can be cooked in a variety of styles, crisp or juicy, with bone or without, with red sauce or guacamole, plain or in a tortilla.

The well-browned pork comes in small bits or shreds. Taken from an inexpensive cut of pork, the meat is simmered in water until tender. The meat is then cooked in pork fat until nicely browned all over.

Carnitas are usually eaten with salsa and are sometimes also used as filling for burritos.

In this recipe, Tacos de Carnitas are eaten with fresh Pico de Gallo, a relish

made of finely chopped tomato, white onions, jalapeño, cilantro and lime juice.

Marie Vito-Pantoja, who came up with the recipe, has been preparing Tacos de Carnitas since she came home after living in the United States for 10 years.

"I'm a pork eater and when I returned to Manila I terribly missed this Mexican snack. So, I tried to recreate it myself and relive that Mexican roadside taco stand experience," says Pantoja, who runs her own catering business called 4th St. Kitchen specializing in Asian cuisine (tels. 7235773 or 0917-9041264).

Tacos de Carnitas has been one of the most requested dishes in Pantoja's menu.

For this recipe, Pantoja prefers to use pork belly or liempo for its crisp yet juicy meat. She also uses store-bought soft tortilla which she delicately places on a skillet or in a microwave for a few seconds just before eating.

In parties, it's best to serve Tacos de Carnitas with corn tortilla chips.

STEP BY STEP

Asian cuisine (tels. 7235773 or 0917-9041264).



TACOS de Carnitas

Ingredients:
1 kg pork belly (liempo) whole
5 c water
2 tbsp salt
8 pcs peppercorn, freshly ground
6 cloves garlic

12-15 pc soft tortilla (store-bought, Village Gourmet)
Pico de Gallo
1 kg tomatoes, diced
1/2 kg white onions, diced
1/4 c fresh jalapeño or sili pangsigang.
Salt to taste

seeded if desired
1/8 kg fresh cilantro (wanoy), minced
1 tbsp of lime juice or 6 pcs calamansi
Salt to taste

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

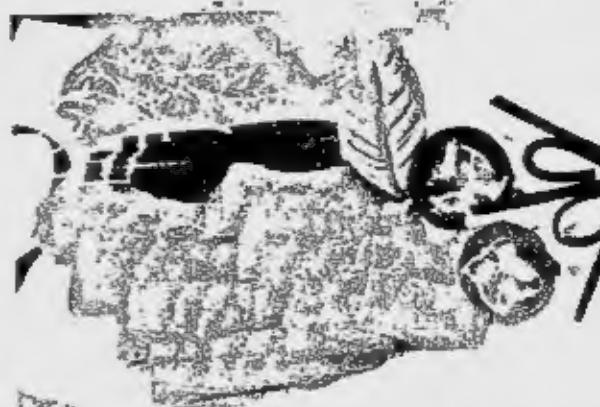
New look for familiar flavors

IMPLA reinvents Filipino flavors that everyone knows, giving each dish a new twist in the preparation and presentation.

The Sisig Spring Rolls is a new rendering of an old favorite. Sisig is put in lumpia wrapper and served with a tangy citrus-soy dressing and spicy chili oil. Lumpiang Ubod is served with Japanese crabstick in a garlic-soy reduction while the crunchy Boneless Crispy Pata Roulade is served with three sauces—an onion-garlic soy vinaigrette, hoisin-lemon sauce and sweet chili sauce.

Timpla outlets are in 2/F Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas, Makati (8125395), and G/F, ELJC Bldg., The Loop, ABS-CBN, Mother Ignacia St., Quezon City (4112634).

YOSHINOYA offers Yoshi Bento meals: the ebi tempura, tuna kabayaki and pork tonkatsu. Yoshinoya outlets are at Park Square 1 in Makati, SM Megamall, Robinsons Galleria, Greenhills Shopping Center and SM City North EDSA.



CENTURY Park Hotel's Unsui Japanese Restaurant features Nabe (hotpot) for the whole month of March. You have a choice of Tara Chiril, Suppon, Tori-Mizutake, Shake-Shirinjo, Kani-Chiril, Unsui Chanko and Kamosuki. Call 5288888.

HYATT Regency Manila's Café Al Fresco Verandah and the Hyatt Poolside offer Sunday Barbecue Brunch for all Sundays of March. Grilled items like tender lamb chops, tenderloin steak and choice chicken cuts will be available. The Sunday Barbecue Brunch is open 11 a.m.-3 p.m. for

HYATT Regency Manila offers for lunch and dinner a special a la carte menu of Toro Sashimi, March 13-26. Call 8331234 loc. 8060.

P900+ (adult) and P450+ (child). Café Al Fresco also has the Special Seafood Buffet Festival all Fridays of March. Call 8331234.

SUJO Hotel serves breakfast meals: Continental, New Yorker and Traditional. The Sushi Bar and Teppanyaki features Yaki Sakana as Dish of the Month. Sujo Hotel is at Matallino Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Call 9245051/71.

KULINARYA Kitchen offers Pork Tenderloin Scallopini, Grilled US Angus Rib Eye Steak, Blackened Tilapia Fillet and Barbecue Shrimps.

Pinoy represents Asia in bartending contest

JOJO "VANILLA ICE" ALMANZA of TGI Friday's Glorietta will represent the Philippines in the TGI Friday's World Bartending Championship on March 5 at the Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada, United States.

Almanza was winner in TGI Friday's Philippines' Shake, Rattle and Pour Bartending Championship for two straight years. He represented the country in TGI Friday's Asian Bartending Championship in October in Taiwan.



JOJO "Vanilla Ice" Almanza of TGI Friday's

In Taiwan, he topped the Compulsory Test Drunks Exam, besting participants from the host country, Japan, Korea, China and Malaysia, and became first runner-up.

The two-day World Bartending Championship in Las Vegas brings together the best bartenders from different regions around the globe, as well as the US.

He will undergo written as well as technical tests. Almanza can prepare 200 drinks.

Almanza, who has been a

bartender at Friday's Glorietta branch for two years now, got his "Vanilla Ice" moniker from the song "Ice, Ice Baby," the background music for his first bartending performance. He is the second bartender of Friday's Philippines to bring honor to the country.

Ronald "Wonder Boy" Valencia was champion in the Asian Bartending Contest and placed second in the World Bartending Championship in Dallas, Texas, in 1999.



GIONNA Cabrera

Limited-edition coffee now available

NESCAFÉ CLASSIC FIRST PICK, which is now in the market, will be available for a limited time only.

The first-pick cherries used in the unique coffee are special and not available all-year round.

The cherries are handpicked with care by Filipino farmers during the beginning of the harvest.

Coffee connoisseurs know that first-pick coffee cherries have a fresh taste. With the special and unique roasting process used by Nescafé, the

Nescafé Classic First Pick is able to bring out and enhance the fresh taste and aroma.

Among those who welcomed the arrival in the market of the limited-edition special coffee were Uniprom Inc. corporate relations director Gus de Castro, 2005 Bb. Pilipinas-Universo and model Gionna Cabrera, and neurologist-professor Dr. Vicente Rosales Jr.

The Nescafé Classic First Pick is now available in supermarkets nationwide.

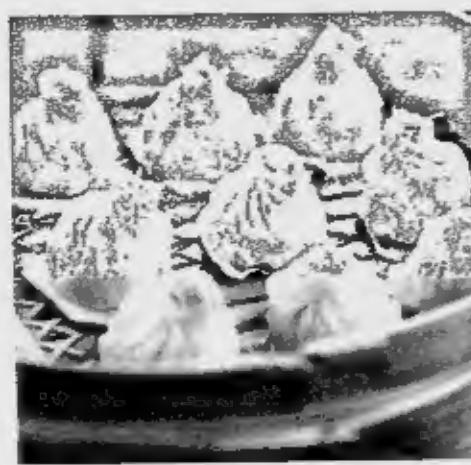


STRAWBERRY Symphony

Dining discounts for SIA passengers

HÄAGEN-DAZS, ZHONGNNANHAI (ZNH) Chinese Bistro, Max Brenner Chocolate Bar and Oliver's Super Sandwiches are among the establishments in Manila which have signed up with Singapore Airlines' Boarding Pass Privileges Program, a Gold Award Winner at the Pacific Asia Travel Association Awards 2005.

Dining, shopping and other lifestyle benefits are now available to SIA passengers arriving in Manila on its three daily flights from Singapore who simply show their SIA



boarding passes within seven days of their flight.

Häagen-Dazs offers 10- to 20-percent discounts on Ice Cream Cakes and free scoops of ice cream for every two orders of Double Scoop Ice Cream. Zhongnnanhai (ZNH) Chinese Bistro offers free large order of Xiao Long Bao for a minimum purchase of P300-P500.

Max Brenner Chocolate Bar offers free Chocishake with any Max Burger; on top of this, Raffles and First Class passengers can also avail of 15-percent discount on all retail products. Oliver's Super Sandwiches offers 20- to 30-percent discounts on Olive Hot Subs. Raffles and First Class passengers gets an additional 15-percent discount on any purchase.

Visit www.singaporeair.com/boarding-pass for a complete list of participating establishments and their offers.



MAX Burger

Start 'em young

By Linda B. Bolido

CONSUMERS WHO WANT TO KNOW WHAT their rights are and where and how to file their complaints should tune in to the Department of Trade and Industry's radio program, "Konsyumer Atbp."

The consumer education program, aired in collaboration with the Philippine Product Safety and Quality Foundation, an organization of local industry associations that promotes product safety and quality by raising product standard consciousness among consumers; Department of Education and ABS-CBN, celebrated its first anniversary recently with a special remote broadcast from the Buhis High School in Pasig City.

"Konsyumer Atbp." airs 10-11:30 a.m., every Saturday on dzMM 630 kHz. It has five segments: "Batas ng Konsyumer," "Bantay Bihin," "Consumer 101: School on the Air," "Strictly Pinoy" and "Ugnayang Konsyumer."

Trade Undersecretary for Consumer Welfare Zenaida Cuisin Maglaya said students were an important target audience because the education of consumers had to start early.

"Young people have a tremendous influence on the buying habits of their parents," Maglaya said.

PLDT acts

Meanwhile, Horace Lavides, media senior manager of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT), said Elisa Hain, who has been waiting for the printer that she was supposed to receive as a new subscriber of the company's Vibe Plan promo, should be getting the item soon. Lavides said he checked with PLDT and was told it was to be delivered to her residence.

He would appreciate feedback from the customer.

Lavides also promised to look into a ques-

THE CONSUMER

(Our regular consumer columnist, Marietta V. Giron, is currently indisposed. So, in the meantime, please send letters to Consumer Corner, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; PO Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph —Editor)

tion raised by another customer, who read the experience of Erwin Oliva (Jan. 23), who availed of the broadband service. The reader said the story "confused me. I recently called PLDT to apply for the Internet dial-up account with phone service, and they told me that it cost P999 a month with a one-year lock-in period. Quite a difference from the P840 mentioned in your article and Erwin Oliva's."

Grateful

PLDT subscriber Jessica Estrella, on the other hand, says thanks for the prompt action on her complaint.

She wrote earlier, "Telesuit subscribers po kami and we have not had any service since Friday evening (Feb. 3). PLDT said they're still fixing the problem."

The complaint was forwarded to PLDT on Feb. 7 and the problem was fixed the day after.

E-mail the writer at lbolido@inquirer.com.ph

The Maya Kitchen

CULINARY ARTS CENTER



Cooking Classes on Meat Processing, Coffee Basic 101, Bartending plus...

Check out Maya Kitchen's best kept culinary secret on its first extensive evening courses program on Entrepreneurship and celebrate the best & flavors of other regular hands-on cooking classes.

Pasta Cooking: Mar. 4 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lasagna, Carbonara, Pasta, Puleasca, Cannelloni with White sauce, Aglio Olio Pasta Bonus: Home-made flavored pasta, P800

Meat Processing Series: Non-preservatives/organic by Ms. Lourdes Rivera, "Guru" of Meat Processing. Basic Processed Meats, Mar. 8 (Wed) 5-8 p.m. Bacon, Ham, Tocino (3 variants: spicy, stripe, tosilog), Corned beef, Tapa, P800; Low-cost rice toppings, Mar. 15 (Wed) 5-8 p.m. Sisig, Embalado, Spicy wings, Sisig, Hamburger & BBQ, P800; Sausage making, Mar. 22 (Wed) 5-8 p.m. Vigan & Lubcan longaniza, Smoked longaniza, Skinless, Native, Chorizo de Bilbao, P800

Coffee Basic 101: Key factors for a success coffee March 8 & 15 Wed. (5-8pm) Coverage: Coffee history, coffee process, Troubleshooting, coffee blend, Machine know-how proper grinding, Techniques to perfect froth. Actual preparation of popular Traditional Hot Coffee Concoction: Espresso, Doppio, Cappuccino, Latte, Macchiato; Cold Coffee Concoction: Millennium Kahlua, Milano mocco, Coffee spin, Caffe affogato, Italian Iced coffee. Free snacks, P2,000

Bartender Basic: (setting up a bar w/ workshop & wine tasting) March 22 (Wed) 5-8p.m. Coverage: Basic tools, equipment & supplies standard measurements, types of glasses, garnish, classification of wine, spirits & liquors. Workshop sampling & tasting of: Classic Margarita, Flavored Martini, Brandy, Tequila, Whisky, Rum, Liquor concoctions. Free pututan, P1,000

Chinese Dimsum: Mar. 26 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Pork Dumpling, Vegetable dumpling, Chicken feet, Kikiam, Fish balls, Slopao-Cuaapao, Buchi, P800

CERTIFICATE COURSES WITH HANDS-ON (Limited enrollment, Pre-registration required)

Basic Cake Design: March 11 & 18 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Fundamentals of cake decorating; coloring, designing, template, Icing (billed, caramel, chocolate, sugar, Icing); basic borders, jelly lettering, basic flowers including bunching techniques, Individual workshop on icing application and cake designing, P3,000

Basic Culinary: March 7-10/March 21-24/April 4-7 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; proper mise-en-place of mise-en-place, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs and spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing and boning poultry, filleting fish and meat fabrication. With actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry and meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation. Free Mix & Match cookbook, P5,000

Fundamentals of Baking Production: March 14-17/March 28-31/April 18-21 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Standard baking techniques applicable to baking application on the use of ready mixes, yeast bread, quick breads, pies, cookies and cakes, P4,000

For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Araneta Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5611 loc. 108; or e-mail us at minkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph

Mind your manners . . .

From page C4

• Happy birthday, Ed! Quimson's Kitchen Delights now accepts food orders. He recommends Paella Catalana, Iberian Chicken and Lengua de Gato. Call 8188077.

• J. Gamboa just opened a Milkyway Branch in Virra Mall. Congratulations!

• Toffeeay—goey toffee bars! So rich, fattening and cheap! Call 5251648/6717606.

• My new cooking class schedules are out including "Manang's Ready to Party," Part 3 of the Gourmet Cucinera Series, for household help and for the novice gourmet cook, with a class devoted particularly to table setting. And, "Diego Mio," whimsical summer cooking for kids. Call 9289296/6335162.

• For those in the provinces or overseas, call Joel Luna at 4371316 for your copies of "Kitchen Rescue," Vol. 1. Books are mailed directly to you!

E-mail the author rasperas@inquirer.com.ph

Overseas . . .

From page C1

In 1992, it was reported that the Moroccan and the Philippine restaurants were top favorites. Last year, Barreto did it again at the Nagoya Expo.

One reason for the popularity of our food at international exhibitions could be Barreto's presentation. With coconut as the theme of the Filipino booth, she served mainly food using our most versatile ingredient.

Tinolang manok was placed in small coconuts of uniform size, the top covered with pastry. The coconuts were then put in an oven. When the crust was opened, steam would escape, a hot and exciting prelude to the light, tasty chicken soup.

Barreto also devised a new way with lumpiang Shanghai. Her lumpia were extra long pieces, three in one order. The lumpia were placed in paper containers with three holes. People went all over the Expo holding the lumpia, she said.

She renamed it Lumpiang Binondo because she didn't want to give Shanghai free advertisement. An Australian, however, almost gave the game away when he told her it was really Lumpiang Shanghai. But she said the lumpia was different because she added buko to the mix.

And so now we come to the many Filipino workers and migrants all over the world. Think of the yayas who will introduce their alaga to adobo and sinigang, exposing young palates to a different cuisine.

In Hong Kong, on their day off, Filipino domestics invited us to a streetside lunch which included rice and alimasag complete with vinegar dip. And, in Alaska, Filipinos made sure the heads of the fish we caught ended up as sinigang, flavored by powdered souring broth bought from the supermarket.

Of course, I understand that breaking into the international scene also means having several restaurants all over the world, like the Thais and Vietnamese. But we have been working on that, too. A group of restaurateurs and Filipino food promoters has been choosing dishes to promote abroad. Called Kulinarya, the group has pared the menu to about 40 dishes and are now working on the recipes.

The groundwork has been done. It's slow work but we are getting there.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com



Market! Market! is in Bonifacio Global City. For inquiries, call Customer Service Hotline at 888-7519.

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a world to discover

The rule on the use of cutlery is out moving in, meaning, the outer ones are used for the first dish and so on

ENTERTAINING CAN BE EITHER A MOST relaxing or a most grueling experience. But it really should be more the former than the latter because of all the comforts that chefs, restaurants and caterers can provide you in this day and age.

If you're having a party, let Thai chef Thea set up his phad thai station for you and cook the famous rice noodles before your very eyes. What a treat! Remember, since it's a make-your-own phad thai station, put a lot of sauce! Contact Flor Villote, 0920-9047459 or 0922-8784579.

I am Anna and I'm about to meet the parents of my boyfriend for the first time. My boyfriend is from a prominent family and that makes me nervous. Please give me tips

KITCHEN RESCUE



Reggie Aspiras



SAWASDEE Kal Chef Thea greets you as he flips his phad thai noodles.

on proper table manners.

Let me see if I remember my manners...

- Sit up straight.
- As soon as you sit, put your napkin on your lap.
- Hold your utensils properly—spoons and forks are held horizontally by three fingers: the middle finger by the first knuckle, the index finger, and the thumb which rests by the fork or spoon's handle. The knife held by the thumb and middle finger with the index finger gently pointed, pressing outwards over the top of the blade to guide as you cut.
- If uncertain about how to use glasses, utensils, watch and learn from those around you. (One of my dad's guests once drank from a finger bowl!)
- If there are a lot of forks, spoons and knives in front of you, the rule is out moving in, meaning, the outer ones are used for the first dish and so on.
- Do not take the first bite. Your cue is when other people in your table, or the host/hostess have started.
- Never rest your elbows on the table. In between bites, rest your hands on your lap or rest your elbows on the table's edge.
- Taste your food before adding salt and pepper.
- Do not overstuff your plate with food.
- Your glass is to the right and your bread to the left! Do not eat from the bread plate of your boyfriend's mom nor drink from the glass of his dad!
- Wipe your mouth before you take a sip, no one likes to look at a lip-smudged glass.
- Eat bread by breaking them into small pieces. Do not put in your mouth whole!
- If you can't handle a drink, don't!
- Chew with your mouth closed. No sound effects, funny noises slurping or burping!
- Food stuck between your teeth should be discreetly taken off with the tongue. Don't do the teeth vacuum! If that doesn't work, leave the table and do it in private!
- If you are stuck with a tough piece of meat, please do not spit it out on your napkin. Considering that you are trying to impress, close your eyes and swallow it! Hahaha! Or if you must, stand up and excuse yourself to excise the meat privately.
- Never leave the table before the meal is done. If you must, excuse yourself.
- Stick to safe subjects of conversation during the meal.
- If you find a piece of bone in your mouth, remove it using the same utensil it went in with, putting the bone on the edge of the plate.
- Do not overreach for things. Politely ask for it to be passed to you.
- Do not, under any circumstance, make baon!

Anna, just be yourself. They will like you best that way! As long as you greet them separately by saying, "Good evening, ma'am! Good evening, sir!" and not "Good evening, ma'am, sir!" (hahaha!), then you're off to a grand start! The best of luck, my dear!

Summer is coming and mangoes will be in season. Can I have a recipe for making preserved green mango? I've tasted some in exhibits and I can't believe that it can be crunchy even when preserved.

VIRGIE

Preserved green mangoes

- Slice 1 kg green mangoes, arrange in a bottle.
- In a bowl, mix 1 c rock salt with 5 c water until salt is dissolved.
- Pour salt solution over mangoes.
- Refrigerate for two days.
- Drain salt solution from mangoes.
- Bring 1 1/2 c of sugar with 4 c to a boil to make syrup.
- Cook syrup and cool.
- Pour over mangoes.
- Refrigerate three days before serving.

Odds and ends

- Rotisseries at bargain prices! Roasts 25 chickens at a time. Darwin Lacerna of the Roaster's Chicken chain in Isabela took the saying "cheaper by the dozen" to an extreme! So he's disposing of some units. Contact 0917-5741178.
- Tarta de Madrid—it's been a while since I've had this! Gene Gonzales' is flaky with loads of Bavarian cream. Call 3732789.

MIND/CJ

I saw our in-store display without seeing the store



Allen Bacalan of General Milling Corporation is one of many other Globe users who were the first to experience the power of Globe 3G since January. He cites the usefulness of video sharing for his company.

"Show me the product, show me the display."

From his office at the Export Bank Plaza, he asked one of his staff members to call him from the convenience store nearby to do an impromptu trade check. Through their Globe 3G phones, he was able to see how his products were displayed on the store's shelves as well as the inventory. But more importantly, he was able to check whether they stood out against the competing brands on the same shelves. They did.

"I got the information I needed right on time."

This February, Allen arrived early for a meeting at the Shangri-La Hotel. While waiting for the meeting to start, he watched the latest news from ANC on his phone.



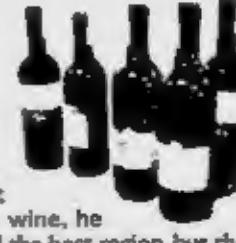
Thanks to Globe 3G video streaming, he got up-to-the-minute prices of commodities just in time for the meeting.

3G

The faster transmission speeds and higher bandwidth of Globe 3G open a lot of doors for new and innovative services that help you in making more informed decisions faster. In addition to video sharing and video streaming, you also have video calling that lets you see and hear who you are talking to as well as fast browsing and even faster downloads for internet surfing and downloading at DSL speeds.

ABS-CBN **GMA**

Of course, it's not always work for Allen. When stuck in traffic on the way home, he watches his favorite TV shows on ABS-CBN and GMA. Sometimes, he browses through his favorite websites which range from CNN News to palmjokes.com.



"Akala rin nila expert ako sa wine."

Once, when Allen went out for dinner with his friends, they thought he was sending out a text message when he was actually connecting to bbr.com. So when it came time to order wine, he didn't just recommend the best region, but the best vintage as well.

"When Globe first introduced text messaging, they set a new standard in communication. With 3G, they continue to raise the bar. I'm impressed."

As the leader in mobile innovation, Globe continues to be committed in making great things possible and enriching the lives of the Filipino people.

sa **Globe** possible